Ethical Revaluation in the Thought of Śāntideva

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the idea of *ethical revaluation* — taking things we normally see as good for our flourishing and seeing them as neutral or bad, and vice versa — in the Mahāyāna Buddhist thinker Śāntideva. It shows how Śāntideva's thought on the matter is more coherent than it might otherwise appear, first by examining the consistency of Śāntideva's own claims and then by applying them to contemporary ethical thought. In so doing, it makes four significant contributions.

Śāntideva claims that property and relationships are bad for us because they promote attachment, and that others' wrongdoing is good for us because it allows us to generate patient endurance. Yet he also urges his readers to give property to others, and to prevent their wrongdoing. Is he caught in contradiction? The dissertation argues that he is not, because giving to others is not intended to benefit them materially, but rather to produce beneficial mental states in them, and preventing wrongdoing is intended to benefit the wrongdoer and not the victim. In both cases, Śāntideva emphasizes individual action in a way that makes social or

political action more difficult to justify.

The dissertation's first contribution is to show how this interpretation of Śāntideva contrasts notably with standard presentations of Mahāyāna ethics. Its second contribution is to refute claims that Buddhists have no normative ethics.

Śāntideva's resolutions of these apparent contradictions also have relevance for contemporary ethical thought. Martha Nussbaum argues against an ethical revaluation similar to Śāntideva's, on the grounds that such a revaluation makes it contradictory to argue for providing goods to others, preventing others' wrongdoing or engaging in political action. Śāntideva's views show that ethical revaluation is a more sustainable position than these criticisms of Nussbaum's would imply; if it is to be rejected, it must be rejected on other grounds. To show this point is the dissertation's third contribution. The fourth contribution is methodological; by finding similarities of concern and differences of opinion between Śāntideva and a contemporary thinker, it helps bridge the gap between normative and comparative religious ethics.

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I. Introduction

Someday we will lose all of the things we love, whether during our life or when we die. So, we are better off not feeling attached to them in the first place. Indeed, attachment poses such a danger to our flourishing that having any possessions and relationships can be harmful to it. Similarly, anger burns us up from inside and leads us to harm others, so it is vital to learn how to resist it. And learning how to do so is difficult enough that we should welcome chances to practise — such as when other people act wrongly towards us.

The above is a simplified account of the idea that I will call *ethical revaluation*, as it appears in the work of the classical Indian Mahāyāna Buddhist thinker Śāntideva. (I will explain the idea in more detail in my third chapter.) Śāntideva's opposition to attachment and anger, and his advocacy of their opposites — nonattachment and patient endurance — is such that he urges his audience to dramatically reconsider the value that many things have for our flourishing. Property and personal relationships, things we would normally take as goods, are actually harmful to our flourishing, because of their tendency to produce attachment. By contrast,

others' wrongdoing is beneficial to us, because it can help produce patient endurance.

In my dissertation — both with respect to the concept of "ethical revaluation," and otherwise — I intend the broad sense of the terms "ethics" and "ethical," as suggested by Martha Nussbaum (1990, 23-5): that is, inquiry into the question, "How should one live?" This is not a universally accepted definition; it rules out narrower conceptions that focus, for example, on the question "How should one act?" But I take it as an appropriate definition because ethics, conceived this way, is a useful English term to describe Śāntideva's overall project. As we will see, Śāntideva finds the path of the bodhisattva — the path aiming at becoming a buddha, including its conclusion in buddhahood — to be the best life that a human being can live. And the bulk of his works, if not their entirety, are devoted to reflection on the nature of this path. Therefore, "ethics" in the context of his work specifically means inquiry into the nature of the bodhisattva path. And "ethical revaluation," in turn, has to do with revaluing things and events according to their ability to help or hinder one's progress on that path. Because this dissertation is concerned with both this inquiry into the path and (later) with contemporary accounts of how best to live, it is a project in

ethics.

Śāntideva's ethical revaluation is unquestionably a radical idea — it upsets many ideals and values that might often be taken for granted, in our context as well as in Śāntideva's. Indeed, it seems to get Śāntideva himself in some trouble. For he urges his audience to give material possessions to others compassionately, for their benefit. But if possessions are so dangerous, how can they really benefit their recipients? And he urges them further to *prevent* others' wrongdoing, even to oneself — but why should one do this if the wrongdoing turns out to be beneficial to the victims?

Flow of the argument

My dissertation will argue that, in defending ethical revaluation while simultaneously advocating compassionate giving and the prevention of wrongdoing, Śāntideva remains consistent. He can remain consistent because he advocates these latter actions for very different reasons than one might otherwise expect, reasons fully compatible with ethical revaluation. A consideration of these different reasons can call key assumptions of ours into question — assumptions both in our general understanding of Mahāyāna

Buddhist ethics, and in contemporary normative ethical reflection.

The dissertation will make the case for these claims as follows. Most of the substantive argument for the claims occurs in the fourth, fifth and seventh chapters; the remaining chapters lay the groundwork for the argument to be effective. This introductory chapter will provide the most basic groundwork for understanding Śāntideva's ideas. It will first examine questions of texts and authorship, establishing what we know and don't know about Śāntideva, what I mean when I use the name "Śāntideva," and how I will read the texts attributed to him. Then it will discuss the content of his works at a broad level: the ideal of the bodhisattva, as it is advocated in his texts.

The second chapter will make the case that Śāntideva's works are indeed works of ethics, and *rational* works of ethics — using rational argument to persuade his audience that the bodhisattva path is the best life to follow. Here I articulate my understanding of reason, and explain at length the kinds of reasons that I see Śāntideva using to persuade his audience. The point that Śāntideva's works are rational works of ethics — of a sort that disconfirms some recent claims of Damien Keown's — is developed further in the third through fifth chapters as well.

The third chapter builds on this general understanding of Śāntideva's reasons, using it to demonstrate the specific reasoning behind ethical revaluation. It outlines the ideals of nonattachment and patient endurance that make ethical revaluation so important for Śāntideva. It then explains what I see ethical revaluation to be, and how it follows from these two ideals.

In the fourth chapter, I turn to the first of the difficulties that I mentioned above. How can Śāntideva urge that one compassionately give the goods that he has revalued as negative and harmful? I show that one gives not because the goods themselves are beneficial, but because the act of giving — the gift encounter — produces beneficial mental states in the recipient, notably esteem for the bodhisattva giving the goods.

In the fifth chapter, I turn to the second difficulty. Why should one prevent others' wrongdoing when it can be beneficial to the victim? I demonstrate that one prevents wrongdoing not to benefit the *victim*, but to benefit the *wrongdoer*, whose mind will be adversely affected by his own bad actions.

I see both of these rationales, for giving and preventing wrongdoing, as ingenious resolutions to the apparent contradictions following from ethical revaluation. As well as explaining their logic, in both chapters I also discuss

their significance. Both of these resolutions, coupled with the basic point of revaluation itself, go against the grain of Mahāyāna ethics as it is commonly perceived, especially but not only among the contemporary movement of politically active Buddhists known by Thich Nhat Hanh's (1967) label "Engaged Buddhism."[1]

Specifically, they diverge notably from four theses commonly held to be Mahāyāna doctrine: first, that great suffering comes from material deprivation and others' wrongdoing; second, that deprived people gain an inherent benefit from coming to acquire the material goods they lack; third, that one will be led to prevent wrongdoing, especially violence, out of compassion for its victims; and that therefore, finally, a compassionate

1. See Queen and King (1996) for some examples. I do not intend to make the broad claim that contemporary engaged Buddhism is an unprecedented innovation in Buddhist tradition; such a sweeping statement is inappropriate in a project like this which focuses on one thinker. Thomas Freeman Yarnall (2000) refers to such claims as "modernist"; he associates them with recent work celebrating engaged Buddhism as a new development, and attacks some of their assumptions. Yarnall does not marshal evidence to demonstrate that Buddhist political concern existed before the nineteenth century. In the course of the dissertation I will note some traditional Buddhist sources, such as the Upāsakaśīla Sūtra, which treat material deprivation and violence as real sources of suffering for their victims, and therefore lend themselves as a resource for political action. It seems to me, however, that Śāntideva's works are generally not among these.

bodhisattva will engage in political action on behalf of the deprived and victimized. All four of these theses are explicit or implicit in the writings of the present Dalai Lama, for example (Dalai Lama XIV 1999), who explicitly claims to be a follower of Śāntideva.

As chapters 3-5 show, however, a close reading of Śāntideva's texts suggests a different interpretation and a very different view. Śāntideva's ethical revaluation involves a claim that suffering derived from internal causes, not material deprivation or others' wrongdoing. For him, compassion and altruism are directed at that suffering and its internal causes. This fact leads him to the resolutions mentioned above: there is no benefit to having material goods, even for those who lack them, but only in the mental transformation one might gain from receiving them from another; one prevents wrongdoing out of compassion for the wrongdoers, not for the victims. As a result, the ethics expressed in Śāntideva's texts emphasizes individual and not social change. And so it seems to me that his thought explicitly or implicitly involves at least suspicion toward, and in some cases outright rejection of, each of these four theses.

As well as being a counterexample to received understandings of Mahāyāna ethical reflection, I argue, Śāntideva's positions as developed in

the fourth and fifth chapter can also reshape our understanding of contemporary ethical thought. The seventh chapter demonstrates this point by bringing Śāntideva's ideas on revaluation into dialogue with the work of the contemporary ethical thinker Martha Nussbaum; the sixth chapter outlines the methods I will use to make this dialogue fruitful. In the sixth chapter I discuss how a dialogue with Nussbaum's thought in particular allows me to engage with contemporary ideas in a broader way, and I show how this approach makes a methodological contribution to the field of comparative religious ethics.

The seventh chapter argues that Śāntideva's positions can effectively refute several contemporary arguments made against ethical revaluation, as they appear in Nussbaum's discussions of "external goods." Nussbaum, in effect, argues that one who revalues goods as Śāntideva does cannot logically be compassionate, provide such goods to others, prevent others' wrongdoing, or participate in politics. I show how the arguments we have already seen can counter these various claims of hers, so that they lose their normative force. If one is to argue against ethical revaluation, I claim, it must be on other grounds. I turn at the end of that chapter to examining what those grounds could consist of, without deciding the question one way or another. The

conclusion, in addition to summing up the arguments made, suggests directions for further contemporary normative reflection on ethical revaluation.

Approaching Śāntideva's works

This section establishes basic points about texts and authorship. The first subsection introduces Śāntideva, the subject of the dissertation, and explains his historical significance. The next two subsections are intended for philologically inclined readers; they discuss the state of our knowledge of Śāntideva and justify my method of taking Śāntideva's texts together as the work of a single author.

Śāntideva's works and influence

The name Śāntideva is associated above all with two extant texts, the Bodhicaryāvatāra (BCA) and the Śikṣāsamuccaya (ŚS). In this section I introduce these texts and explain their significance.

The Bodhicaryāvatāra ("Introduction to the Conduct of a Bodhisattva"), in its most widely known form, is a work of just over 900 verses. Tibetan

legends suggest that the text was originally recited orally (see de Jong 1975), as do the text's own literary features (Kajihara 1991). Although it has been translated into Tibetan multiple times and is revered throughout Tibetan Buddhist tradition, it was originally composed and redacted[2] in Sanskrit. Its Sanskrit is relatively close to Paninian standards of grammar, with a Buddhist vocabulary. It is widely appreciated for both literary beauty and profound thought.[3] Its ten chapters lead their reader through the path to being a bodhisattva — a future Buddha, and therefore a being on the way to perfection, according to Mahāyāna tradition.[4] It begins with praise for *bodhicitta*, the state of mind that makes one an aspiring bodhisattva, and

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2. See below for a discussion of the BCA's redaction. The discussion in this paragraph refers to the canonical, redacted, edition.

3. As will become clear, my interest in this dissertation is on the latter more than the former. This is not to deny the text's literary qualities, only to emphasize a particular side of the text for the purposes of the dissertation. I have done work elsewhere on the text's literary form (Lele 2005) and do refer at points to literary features when I think they are relevant to the claims being argued.

4. Mahāyāna, literally "Great Vehicle," seems to have referred to the bodhisattva path from its earliest uses in Sanskrit, though understandings of the nature of this path had changed significantly even by Śāntideva's time (see Nattier 2003).

ends with a ritual redirection (*pariṇāmaṇā*) of good karma, by which the bodhisattva attempts to benefit those around him. The chapters in between deal with various topics, but they focus especially on developing the six "perfections" or virtues (*pāramitā*) of a bodhisattva: giving or generosity (*dāna*), properly restrained conduct (*śīla*), patient endurance (*kṣānti*), heroic strength (*vīrya*), meditative concentration (*dhyāna*) and metaphysical insight (*prajñā*). The last four each receive their own chapter of the text.

The Śikṣāsamuccaya ("Anthology for Training") is a longer prose work in nineteen chapters, set up as a commentary on twenty-seven short mnemonic verses known as the Śikṣāsamuccaya Kārikā (hereafter ŚSK). It consists primarily of quotations (of varying length) from *sūtra*s, authoritative texts considered to be the word of the Buddha — generally those *sūtra*s associated with Mahāyāna tradition.[5] It too was originally composed in Sanskrit, as were the *sūtra*s it quotes. However, while Śāntideva's own portions are in relatively standard Sanskrit, the quotations are mostly in the heavily vernacularized language usually known, following Edgerton (1970a),

5. Most scholars have taken the ŚS to be composed almost entirely of such quotations; Paul Harrison (2007) has recently claimed that a more substantial portion than previously thought is original to the redactor.

as Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit. It is considerably less accessible to a novice reader than the BCA, and its organization can be bewildering. Richard Mahoney (2002) has recently provided a clear account of the text's structure. I think this account is persuasive and will discuss it at greater length in the next section. Paul Griffiths (1999, 133-9) also provides a short but helpful discussion of the text's approach to anthologizing.

The figure of Śāntideva is deeply significant in the history of Tibetan Buddhism, mostly because of the BCA's vast influence. For example, Michael Sweet (1996, 245) describes it as "the most important source" for the entire Tibetan literary genre of *blo sbyong* ("mental purification"), and the present Dalai Lama cites it as the highest inspiration for his ideals and practices (Williams 1995, ix). Tibetan commentators have written many commentaries on the text over the years, several of which are now available in English translation (e.g. Gyatso 1986; Rinpoche 2002; Tobden 2005). While the ŚS was less influential overall, the tradition has not ignored it. In 1998 the present Dalai Lama gave public teachings on the ŚS, referring to it as a "key which can unlock all the teachings of the Buddha" (quoted in Clayton 2006, 2).

Śāntideva's degree of influence in Indian Buddhist tradition is much

harder to ascertain, given the relative lack of historical evidence, and the tradition's declining influence in the centuries that followed the writing of his texts. The BCA, especially its ninth chapter, is quoted in an anthology called the Subhāṣitasaṃgraha. The ŚS is referred to in a few Sanskrit texts preserved in Tibetan: the Śikṣāsamuccayābhisamaya of Suvarṇadvīparāja, a short tract commenting on the ŚS; the Śikṣākusumamañjarī of Vairocanarakṣita, a text which quotes (but does not cite) the ŚS; and the Bodhimārgapradīpapañjikā of Atiśa, which regularly mentions Śāntideva and his works by name (Bendall 1970, viii-x). The Indian reception of Śāntideva is most significant because it included Prajñākaramati's commentary on the BCA, which was highly influential for the Tibetans who followed, and which (as mentioned) quotes heavily from the ŚS. (Crosby and Skilton 1995, xxiii).

The BCA has also been widely translated, studied, and admired in the West. Luís Gómez (1999, 262-3) even suggests that it is now the third most frequently translated text in all of Indian Buddhism, after the Dhammapāda and the Heart Sūtra.[6] A recent introductory text (Cooper 1998) treats the

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6. I think there are good reasons for its status. In an article arguing that many South Asian Buddhist texts are not well suited to English translation and generally best "summarized, analyzed and interpreted" rather than translated, Paul Griffiths nevertheless accepts that some such texts "do in fact possess the literary characteristics which make translation a

BCA as one of "the classic readings" in ethics, alongside such works as Plato's *Gorgias* and Mill's *Utilitarianism*. (See Onishi 2003 for a thesis-length discussion of the text's Western reception.)

Data on authorship

Nearly all of what is known of a historical figure named Śāntideva is known through his texts; I argue below that the term "Śāntideva" is best used to refer to the character imagined as the author of those texts. Some discussion of the available forms of these texts will help clarify the ways in which their content has become known to us today.

The original Sanskrit text of the ŚS is available in a single manuscript in Old Bengali script, found in Nepal, dating to the 14th or 15th century CE and now held in the Cambridge University Library (Wright Collection, Add. 1478). The Tibetan version is in volume *ki* (31) of the India Office edition of the bsTan 'gyur; it is mostly identical to the Sanskrit, though it expounds the text's sūtra quotations at greater length. A Chinese version also exists.

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suitable method of undertaking the hermeneutical task — namely, the characteristics of precision, lucidity and elegance." The BCA is his first example of such a text. (Griffiths 1981, 28)

(Bendall 1970, xxiv-xxx) The one scholarly edition of the Sanskrit is Cecil Bendall's, produced in 1902, which rendered the Sanskrit manuscript with some assistance from the Tibetan for corrupt passages; I have used this edition in my study. The edition reflects some unusual Sanskrit spellings in the manuscript, such as *satva* for *sattva*[7]; I have used those spellings in quotes from the Sanskrit, but not when I discuss the terms in the text.

The BCA was first edited in the West by I.P. Minayeff in 1889, based on three independent manuscripts which were available to him in Russia. Soon afterwards, Louis de la Vallée Poussin published an edition which consulted two other manuscripts of the text (in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris) and two manuscripts of Prajñākaramati's commentary (one in Nepali script of the first nine chapters, and one in Maithili script of the ninth chapter alone). This edition contains some missing portions, which were filled by P.L. Vaidya in his 1959 edition, and I have relied on the latter, although I use Poussin's pagination since this is listed in the Vaidya edition as well.

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7. This point is noted on page iv of a section at the end of the Bendall 1970 edition, which Bendall labels "Introduction (preliminary)" and whose pages, for some reason, are numbered separately from the rest of the work. I note this point here to avoid conclusion between this "page iv" and page iv of the edition's regular introduction.

I differ from the Vaidya edition (and the Poussin edition before it) in numbering the verses of the BCA's ninth chapter. Crosby and Skilton (1995, 113) claim that Vaidya and Poussin numbered the verses based on a mistake made in one Sanskrit manuscript of the text, which had copied the equivalent of a single verse twice. Minayeff accidentally followed this numbering, and Poussin and Vaidya kept his mistaken numbering, though they recognized his error. The alternative numbering that Crosby and Skilton follow is found in other Sanskrit manuscripts, throughout the Tibetan tradition, and in most translations, so I adhere to it instead of to the Sanskrit editions.

These Sanskrit editions record a recension of ten chapters and over 900 verses that corresponds closely to the Tibetan version in the bsTan 'gyur collection (T No. 3871-2). The Dunhuang library contained a very different recension of the text, in Tibetan, with only nine chapters and 701.5 verses. (Saito 1993 is the fullest discussion of this recension.) Chiko Ishida (1988) compares the two texts and concludes that the Dunhuang recension represents an older version of the BCA; Akira Saito (1996, 258) confirms her assessment. For his dissertation, Richard Mahoney is currently producing a critical edition of the BCA that relies on the Dunhuang text. Until this work is complete, however, no complete published edition of the Dunhuang text

exists; Saito (2000) has published only some of its chapters. These chapters are notable for demonstrating that much of the material added to the canonical BCA is shared with the ŚS.

While the Dunhuang recension demonstrates that the canonical BCA is likely a redacted text, few dispute outright the tradition's assessment that the BCA and ŚS shared an author in some form. The Indian-Tibetan teacher Atiśa, the major Tibetan historians (Tāranātha, Bu-ston, and Ye-shes dpal-'byor), a 14th-century Sanskrit manuscript found in Nepal by Hariprasad Sastri, and most commentators (including Prajñākaramati) all agree that a single person named Śāntideva composed three texts: the Bodhicaryāvatāra, the Śikṣāsamuccaya and the Sūtrasamuccaya.[8] (Bendall 1970, iii-v; Pezzali

8. No separate Sūtrasamuccaya attributed to Śāntideva now survives. The only text that survives by the name Sūtrasamuccaya is a work attributed to Nāgārjuna in the Tibetan bsTan 'gyur, and indeed the contents of this work seem closer to Nāgārjuna's concerns than to Śāntideva's (Banerjee 1941). I am aware of no scholar who suggests that this bsTan 'gyur text is in fact the Sūtrasamuccaya referred to by the later figures in the tradition who mention Śāntideva. Some scholars now claim the later figures used the term "Sūtrasamuccaya" to refer to what we know as the Śikṣāsamuccaya, and "Śikṣāsamuccaya" only to the Kārikās (e.g. Filliozat 1964, 475-7); others suggest that there never was a Sūtrasamuccaya of Śāntideva (Winternitz 1912) or that such a text may have existed but is now lost (Pezzali 1968, 85-6). The BCA and ŚS, then, constitute the extant corpus attributed to Śāntideva.

1968, 6-7, 18-19, 29-30)

To my knowledge, the only contemporary scholar who attempts to cast doubt on the idea that the BCA and ŚS had an author in common is Susanne Mrozik (1998, 6). Mrozik notes that the Dunhuang recension of the BCA does not contain the verse (V.105 in the canonical BCA) which recommends study of the ŚS, and that it lists Akṣayamati (Blo-gros-mi-zad-pa) and not Śāntideva (Zhi-ba-lha) as the author. However, Akira Saito — from whom Mrozik indirectly draws her evidence about the Dunhuang[9] — argues that "we may safely arrive at an acceptable conclusion that Akṣayamati was an epithet which was applied to Śāntideva," and takes Śāntideva to be the author of the ŚS. He notes that the Akṣayamatinirdeśa Sūtra is one of the most frequently quoted *sūtra*s in the ŚS, and that Bu-ston and Atiśa both mention "Akṣayamati" as an epithet ascribed to Śāntideva (the name they give for the author of the BCA and ŚS). (Saito 1993, 20-2)

A more interesting text-critical question is the nature of the additions to the canonical BCA. Was there an original author of both the BCA (as found in the Dunhuang) and the ŚS, as Saito claims, perhaps implying that a

9. Mrozik's reference is to Crosby and Skilton (1995, xxx-xxxii), who are in turn referring to Saito's work.

different and later hand added so much material (much of it derived from the ŚS) to make the canonical BCA? Or did the later composer of the ŚS also add his own material to an earlier BCA? Or, as Paul Harrison (2007) suggests, did one and the same person first compose the earlier BCA recension, then compose the ŚS, and then finally add material to the BCA for the later recension — making all three versions the work of a single historical composer? To my knowledge, little if any text-critical work has yet been done on this question. However, it is not a question that bears on my work here; I mention it for the sake of completeness and encouraging others' interest. My approach to Śāntideva does not depend on the nature of the texts' historical composer(s), as I will discuss shortly.

It is difficult to learn much about the text's historical composer or redactor beyond what is found in the texts themselves. As noted, Tibetan historians recount the life story of a Śāntideva identified as the texts' author, but it is difficult to sort fact from legend, with so little corroborating evidence. There seems little reason to doubt that someone by the name of Śāntideva and/or Akṣayamati wrote some portion of the two texts, or that he was a monk at the great monastic university of Nālandā. (The Tibetan historians agree on this last point, and based on what we know of Indian Buddhist

history it seems a likely place for historically significant Buddhist works to have been composed.) Beyond that, we can say relatively little beyond the approximate date of the texts' composition. The Tibetan translator Ye-shes-de, who rendered the BCA into Tibetan, worked under the Tibetan king Khri-lde-srong-bstan (816-838 CE), so it must have been composed before that time (Bendall 1970, v). Since the Chinese pilgrim Yijing (aka I-tsing) mentions all the major Indian Mahāyāna thinkers known in India but does not mention Śāntideva or Akṣayamati, it is likely that these texts were composed, or at least became famous, after Yijing left India in 685 CE (Pezzali 1968, 38).

Textual methods

This dissertation will study Śāntideva's ideas together, interpreting the Bodhicaryāvatāra and the Śikṣāsamuccaya in the light of each other. Because the figure of Śāntideva is of considerable importance to Buddhist tradition, one would expect that the ideas of the two extant works attributed to him would have been studied together at length, but to date they have not. (As discussed in a previous footnote, the third work attributed to him — the Sūtrasamuccaya — either does not now exist or is a portion of the Śikṣāsamuccaya.) This study is the first work of Western scholarship to

examine the ideas of both these texts in relation to each other at full length and in detail, as Indian and Tibetan tradition both recommend doing.

Indian and Tibetan tradition continually recommend that the two texts be studied together — beginning with the canonical BCA itself, which proclaims "the Śikṣāsamuccaya is necessarily (*avaśyaṃ*) to be looked at again and again"[10]. Much of Prajñākaramati's Sanskrit commentary on the BCA is made up of quotes from Buddhist sūtras which are "almost entirely borrowed" from the ŚS (Crosby and Skilton 1995, xlii); he also quotes about half of the Śikṣāsamuccaya Kārikās, and many of them in the same order as they appear in the ŚS. Prajñākaramati's commentary is not a historical outlier; according to Crosby and Skilton (1995, xxiii), later exegesis is "dominated" by his interpretations. Most recently, the present Dalai Lama's commentary on the BCA argues that it is "a good idea to study the *Bodhicharyāvatāra* and *Compendium of All Practices* [a reference to the ŚS] together, as points that are treated succinctly in the one tend to be explained in detail in the other and vice versa." He also notes that the Kadam school has traditionally recommended that these two particular texts be read "at a time." (Dalai

10. *śikṣāsamuccayo 'vaśyaṃ draṣṭavyaś ca punaḥ punaḥ* (BCA V.105). This verse is not in the Dunhuang recension.

Lama XIV 1994, 50)

As mentioned previously, Indian and Tibetan tradition treat the two texts as having a single author, and they regularly point to this common authorship as a reason to study the texts together. The Dalai Lama does so in the passage mentioned above. When Prajñākaramati discusses the qualities of one who has cultivated the awakening mind (*bodhicitta*, the intention to become a bodhisattva), he adds that they "are shown at great length in the Śikṣāsamuccaya by the *śāstrakṛt*; they should be investigated there."[11] *Śāstrakṛt* refers to the author of a *śāstra* or authoritative text; Bendall (1970, v) claims that the term is "a natural description by a commentator of his author."

It is this author, the character postulated by later tradition, that I set out to study under the name Śāntideva. I distinguish this Śāntideva both from the historical composer of the texts, who may or may not be the same (as the previous subsection discusses), and from the later commentaries themselves. While I think the tradition's commentarial treatment of Śāntideva is a good reason to carry out a study of his texts together, and have

11. *te ca ativistareṇa śāstrakṛtā śikṣāsamuccaye darśitāś ca tatraiva avadhārayitavyāḥ* (BCAP 32, commenting on BCA I.25).

discussed that treatment here for that reason, I should note that it is primarily those texts that I intend to study, rather than the commentarial tradition itself. I will make some use of commentaries as potential sources for ideas on how to interpret the BCA and ŚS texts; but the actual topic of my research will not be the commentaries themselves but rather their object, the corpus of ideas which the commentaries took themselves to be commenting on.[12]

I am therefore treating Śāntideva, in Alexander Nehamas's (1981) terms, as a "postulated author." Rather than being equivalent to the historical writer, for Nehamas an author is "postulated as the agent whose actions account for the text's features; he is a character, a hypothesis which is accepted provisionally, guides interpretation, and is in turn modified in its light." (Nehamas 1981, 145) The tradition, and its attribution of common authorship and coherence, is what produces the original hypothesis of a common author; but in the progress of my work I have come to modify the hypothesis of what Śāntideva is and believes. I have not only changed my own

12. Since the commentaries do not always agree with each other, studying them at any greater length would constitute its own separate dissertation — probably even more than one such dissertation.

understanding of him; I also diverge from some traditional interpretations, most notably those of the present Dalai Lama.

I would also argue that the name "Śāntideva" should be used for this character, the object of traditional commentary, rather than the historical composer (to the extent that the two are different). As mentioned, the older, nine-chapter Dunhuang recension refers to its own composer as Akṣayamati, not Śāntideva; Bu-ston appears to be aware of two different versions of the text, and assigns a nine-chapter version to Akṣayamati and a ten-chapter version to Śāntideva (Saito 1993, 15). If we are to distinguish betwen the two figures, then, we should surely call the historical composer Akṣayamati, and reserve the name Śāntideva for the author recognized by tradition — the character to whom the ŚS and ten-chapter BCA are attributed.

Even though the tradition has seen it valuable to use Śāntideva's works to help interpret each other, Western scholars have rarely done so. Most studies of the BCA (e.g. Gómez 1995; Sweet 1977; Williams 1998) pay no attention to the ŚS. Until recently, most of the scholars who had studied the ŚS (such as de Jong 1987; Ruegg 1981) have found it of interest primarily as a means of access to the many now-lost sūtras it quotes, rather than as a text of interest in its own right. And with a few exceptions, those works that do focus

on the ŚS's own ideas (Hedinger 1984; Klaus 1997; Mahoney 2002; Mrozik 1998) generally make no reference to the BCA in the substance of their analysis.

The most significant exception is Barbra Clayton's recent (2006) study of the ŚS. The fourth and fifth chapters of her work use the BCA's ideas to help explain the major concepts of the ŚS, but the BCA receives few mentions in the remainder of the book. The purpose of Clayton's study is to explicate the ŚS and its ethics as a whole; the more historically influential BCA takes a subordinate role in the project, which is not be the case in this dissertation. The other main exception is Amalia Pezzali (1968), who gives some general discussion of the ideas in both texts in the fourth chapter of her work. However, this discussion is primarily a summary of certain of the texts' ideas, without significant attempts to address interpretive problems, and her selection of ideas is sometimes puzzling. For example, she entitles one section (Pezzali 1968, 130-4) "faith, cult, purification of sins," without mentioning what any of these three topics might have to do with one another.

Other than these books, the works to date discussing the two texts' ideas together at any length are brief: one article by Clayton (2001), who uses evidence from the ŚS to refute Williams's (1998) discussion of the BCA, and

some explanatory materials that Kate Crosby and Andrew Skilton include in their (1995) translation of the BCA. Japanese text-critical studies of the BCA (Ishida 1988; Saito 1993; Saito 2000) do discuss the ŚS, but only to identify common passages and authorship, not with reference to the ideas in the texts. Beyond these, the two texts are usually discussed together only in encyclopedic treatments of Buddhist thinkers (such as Nariman 1972; Ruegg 1981). There is as yet, then, no satisfactory book-length study of any of Śāntideva's ideas that is based on the two of his works together, using each to help interpret the other throughout. To do so is a major textual contribution of this dissertation.

Having discussed what I mean when I refer to Śāntideva as the text's author, I also find it worth specifying what I mean when I refer to the "reader," "readers" or "audience" of either text. Unless a specific reader is mentioned, I mean to refer to the "mock reader" or "implied reader." Walker Gibson (1980, 2) identifies the mock reader as "the fictitious reader... whose mask and costume the individual takes on in order to experience the language" of the text. The mock reader, we might say, is the audience of a text as we can infer it from the text's nature, regardless of whom the historical writer might *actually* have intended the text's audience to be. I use the term

“reader” or “readers” interchangeably with “audience,” for the sake of convention and variety, although “audience” would be more strictly accurate. It includes those who memorize and recite the texts orally, or hear their oral recitation. As noted, the BCA seems intended largely as an oral text. The ŚS seems less so, although Paul Griffiths (1999, 138) suggests an oral dimension to that text as well: when one wished to learn more about the *sūtra*s it quotes, one would ideally consult teachers who had memorized them.

Who is the mock reader of the BCA and ŚS? The reader is a heterosexual male — the reader’s sexual cravings are always discussed in terms of a man’s craving for a woman — and can therefore be referred to in the masculine with no difficulty. He is also a speaker of Sanskrit, and one likely living in or after the seventh century CE. This implies, at the least, that he is well educated, and therefore well versed in the ideas of classical Sanskritic culture. And he is not necessarily on the bodhisattva path when he begins reading or hearing the texts, but is motivated to get on it by the act of learning them — as I will discuss in the next section.

Is the mock reader a monk? It seems to me that the texts’ intended audience is mixed between monks and householders. Kaoru Onishi (2003) has argued that Western scholars and other writers have “ignored” the BCA’s

"monastic aspects, which are especially evident in chapters five and six." Onishi may be right to the extent that monks are a significant component of the text's audience. They are not the only such audience, however. While the principles of conduct put forth in the BCA's fifth chapter resemble those of *vinaya* monastic codes, and indeed some of them have been taken directly from the *prātimokṣa* monastic rule books (Crosby and Skilton 1995, 32), it seems to me that few of them would be impossible or absurd for a householder to follow. In my opinion, at least one Western representation *over*emphasizes the text's monastic aspects: namely Crosby and Skilton's (otherwise usually strong) translation. Crosby and Skilton (1995, 89-90, 100-1) consistently render the Sanskrit *lābha*, when it refers to something the text's narrator or narratee might obtain, as "alms" or "alms gifts." This is not a meaning given to *lābha* anywhere in Monier-Williams's or Apte's Sanskrit dictionaries, or Edgerton's Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit dictionary; rather, they list the term's more common senses of gain, acquisition, acquired property of any kind. It seems to me that Crosby and Skilton assumed that the text *must* be exclusively monastic in orientation, and that therefore alms would be the only kind of *lābha* its narrator or narratee could obtain. I would argue that the repeated usage of *lābha*, as opposed to a term that more clearly means "alms"

(such as *bhikṣā*), suggests that Śāntideva expects that his readers are likely to have property of a more substantial kind. The use of *lābha* suggests to me that Śāntideva considers householders (who could obtain many forms of *lābha*) among the BCA's mock readers.

In the ŚS, too, Śāntideva certainly considers monasticism better and more praiseworthy than householding, but part of his task is to convince householding readers to pursue monasticism. He claims that "in every birth the great bodhisattva goes forth [as a monk]; whether or not a Tathāgata has arisen, he invariably goes forth from the household life."[13] But this is a process renewed in every lifetime, beginning with the household life; and Śāntideva does refer on multiple occasions to householding bodhisattvas. (ŚS 120, 267)

I do not attempt to address the texts in their entirety. Rather, I focus more specifically on the topic of ethical revaluation, an idea which I will show to be significant for our understanding of Śāntideva (and of issues that go well beyond his work). I have selected a single topic in order to explore it in more depth than would be possible in a project that covered the whole scope

13. *bodhisatvo mahāsatvaḥ sarvasyāṃ jātau pravrajaty utpādād vā tathāgatānām anutpādād vâvaśyaṃ gṛhâvāsān niṣkrāmati*, ŚS 14.

of Śāntideva's work. The other main work to take such an approach is Susanne Mrozik's (1998) dissertation, which examines the role played by the body in the ŚS. My textual approach differs from hers in that I examine the BCA as well as the ŚS — in addition, of course, to my selecting a very different topic.[14] I will discuss the nature of this topic in more detail in the third chapter.

I rely on the Sanskrit rather than the Tibetan versions of the two texts because these are held in common, in at least some respect, by all of the later tradition. Prajñākaramati knows only of the Sanskrit versions and not the Tibetan; and Western approaches to the BCA, such as David Cooper's anthology of readings on ethics, have to date also largely been based on the Sanskrit.[15] And the Tibetans, though their study was usually based on the Tibetan texts, nevertheless recognize their Indian and Sanskrit roots.

This subsection and the preceding one are largely intended for the

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14. My overall approach also differs from hers in that I spend a greater portion of my work drawing out the contemporary significance of the topic than she does. Here, however, my concern is with methods for approaching the texts themselves.

15. This latter fact may change in coming years, however, with the recent publication in English of many translations and commentaries derived from the Tibetan. (The most recent such commentary is Chödrön 2005.)

benefit of a philologically inclined Buddhologist and Sanskritist audience, as I hope that my interpretation of Śāntideva is innovative enough to benefit them. For the same reason, I provide the Sanskrit text of all major passages I quote from Śāntideva.[16] Nevertheless, I have intended this work to be accessible to readers who are not Buddhologists or Sanskritists. For this reason, I try to translate as many terms as possible into English (while still providing their Sanskrit equivalents), making exception for a few terms (notably *prasāda*) that resist translation. A key premise of the dissertation's approach, especially in the sixth and seventh chapters, is that Śāntideva's ideas are valuable even to those who would not otherwise be inclined to learn about Buddhism or South Asian culture.

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16. Translations I give of Śāntideva's works are my own. I have aimed at relatively literal translations that reflect the sense of Śāntideva's Sanskrit as closely as possible. In doing so, I have sometimes sacrificed literary beauty and used relatively clunky English. Readers interested in translations that better represent the poetic beauty of Śāntideva's language in the BCA would be well served by the translations of Crosby and Skilton (1995) and Wallace and Wallace (1997).

The bodhisattva

The central concern of both of Śāntideva's texts is the *bodhisattva*. Literally "awakening-being," a bodhisattva is a being aiming to reach the ultimate goal of *bodhi* (awakening or "enlightenment"), by which one becomes a buddha (literally "awakened one"); the Sanskrit words *bodhi* and *buddha* come from the common root *budh* "awaken." The title *Bodhicaryâvatāra*, "introduction to conduct for awakening," is usually taken to be short for *Bodhisattvacaryâvatāra* — "introduction to the conduct of a bodhisattva." Tibetan commentaries and histories often refer to the text by the latter name (*Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa*, in Tibetan); this is also the title given to the text in the Dunhuang recension (Saito 1993, 13-17). "Introduction to the conduct of a bodhisattva" is, I think, a fair description of the contents of the text, although "introduction to conduct for awakening" would be equally fair. Śāntideva also introduces the Śikṣāsamuccaya by claiming he will explain the *sugatâtmajasaṃvārâvatāra*, a similar phrase meaning "introduction to the requirements for the sons of the Sugatas" (ŚS 1). (Throughout Buddhist literature *sugata*, literally "gone well," is a common term for buddhas, and Mahāyāna literature regularly refers to bodhisattvas as the buddhas' sons.) The term "bodhisattva" occurs at least seven times in

all nineteen chapters of the ŚS, though often with the alternate spelling *bodhisatva*.

Becoming a bodhisattva

To describe non-bodhisattvas, Śāntideva most frequently uses the term "ordinary person," *pṛthagjana*. Prajñākaramati glosses "ordinary person" as "not noble," *anārya* (BCAP 291), somewhat unhelpfully since *ārya* is a generic term of praise which can mean many different things. More useful is a reference where Śāntideva refers to the roots of excellence "of all buddhas, bodhisattvas, solitary buddhas, noble searchers and ordinary people"[17] — suggesting that ordinary people are the residual category of all those who do not fall into the previous categories. It is standard in Mahāyāna texts to refer to three "vehicles" (*yāna*) or paths, with the vehicles of the searcher (*śrāvaka*) and solitary buddha (*pratyekabuddha*) being distinguished from the Great Vehicle (*mahāyāna*) of the bodhisattva. It is quite rare, however, for Śāntideva to refer to searchers and solitary buddhas, and even buddhas appear relatively infrequently, so in practice the most important

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17. *sarvabuddhabodhisatvapratyekabuddhâryaśrāvaka-pṛthagjanānām*, ŚS 9.

distinction in his texts is between bodhisattvas and ordinary people.

Śāntideva's view of ordinary people is not flattering. The term "ordinary person" frequently occurs in his work alongside the term "fool" (*bāla*) — sometimes with the latter as a modifier ("foolish ordinary person," *bālapṛthagjana*, as on ŚS 61) and sometimes with the two terms used synonymously and interchangeably, as on ŚS 194. Ordinary people's foolishness traps them in suffering; the way for them to get out of suffering is to get on the bodhisattva path and become a bodhisattva.

To become a bodhisattva, one requires the awakening mind (*bodhicitta*)[18], a mental transformation that brings one out of the status of

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18. *Bodhicitta* is a difficult concept to render adequately into English. Francis Brassard (2000) has attempted a book-length study of this concept of *bodhicitta*, though despite its title it contains surprisingly little discussion of the BCA. He closes with the suggestion that, because *bodhicitta* refers to a "specific spiritual approach and especially the fruits it produces," the term is as untranslatable as "Coca-Cola," so that the "best translation I can therefore imagine for *bodhicitta* is *bodhicitta*™." (Brassard 2000, 150) In my view, however, the decision to leave a term untranslated should not be taken lightly, and I don't think that Brassard has made a strong enough case for this approach. I have followed Crosby and Skilton's (1995, xxxvi) "very literal translation, which we thought would best serve the range of uses to which the term is put in the original language." As a matter of preference, I use a definite article ("the awakening mind") over their capitalization ("Awakening Mind"). While this translation is slightly awkward and does not include every nuance of the term, it nevertheless seems to capture enough of

ordinary person and eventually toward awakening. Śāntideva makes an important distinction between two kinds of the awakening mind: the mind resolved on awakening (*bodhipraṇidhicitta*) and the mind proceeding to awakening (*bodhiprasthānacitta*).[19] The first, he tells us, can be reached quickly; it exists when the thought "I must become a buddha" arises as a vow.[20] He is not as explicit about the nature of the second, but in describing the first he notes that "the awakening mind is productive even without conduct"[21], suggesting that conduct (*caryā*, *bodhicaryā*) may be what makes the difference between the mind resolved on awakening and the mind proceeding to awakening.

It would appear, however, that the mind resolved on awakening, the easier kind, is sufficient to make its possessor into a bodhisattva. The BCA,

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the Sanskrit term's meaning to do the job.

19. This distinction appears in both works, at BCA I.16 and ŚS 8, though it is explained in more detail in the ŚS. Śāntideva is the Indian Buddhist thinker who expresses the distinction most clearly and prominently, but it also appears to a lesser degree in the thought of Kamalaśīla (see Beyer 1974, 103).

20. *tatra bodhipraṇidhicittaṃ | mayā buddhena bhavitavyam iti cittaṃ praṇidhānād utpannaṃ bhavati*, ŚS 8.

21. *vinâpi caryā bodhicittam upakārakam*, ŚS 9.

recall, suggests that it is intended to be ritually recited. Its reader develops the awakening mind while reciting the third chapter sincerely — saying "Therefore I will produce the awakening mind for the welfare of the world."[22] Two verses later, the reciter, apparently not having done anything else in the intervening time, declares: "Today I have been born into the family of the buddhas; now I am a child of the buddhas,"[23] which is to say a bodhisattva.

This is not, of course, the end of the story. Such a beginning bodhisattva has just started on the path; he has a long task ahead of him. Śāntideva does not spell out the different levels of attainment that a bodhisattva may reach, but he suggests that he agrees with the account of ten stages (*bhūmi*) set out in the Daśabhūmika Sūtra and followed in Candrakīrti's Madhyamakâvatāra (see Sprung 1979 for a partial translation of, and commentary on, this latter text). The ŚS quotes the Daśabhūmika six times. In between two of these quotes, Śāntideva distinguishes between "one who has entered a stage" (*bhūmipraviṣṭa*) and a beginning (*ādikarmika*) bodhisattva (ŚS 11), suggesting that beginning bodhisattvas have not even

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22. *tadvad utpādayāmy eṣa bodhicittaṃ jagad dhite*, BCA III.23.

23. *adya buddhakule jāto buddhaputro 'smi sāmprataṃ*, BCA III.25.

entered the first of the ten stages.[24]

Notice, however, that the BCA's reciter effectively does not become a bodhisattva, even a beginning one, until taking the vow in the third chapter. So Śāntideva's audience, it would seem, is not limited to bodhisattvas — a point strengthened by the profuse praises of the awakening mind in the opening chapters of both texts. The reader who starts the text might *not* have generated the awakening mind, might not have started trying to become a bodhisattva, and needs to be convinced of the importance of doing so. This is an important point for my argument. Śāntideva is trying to do at least two things in his texts: he is trying to describe the bodhisattva path, and he is trying to give reasons for following it — reasons which would hold even for an ordinary person, can convince that ordinary person that the bodhisattva path is the best way to live. Moreover, the ethical revaluations I will discuss are not limited to bodhisattvas. Śāntideva's descriptions of the deleterious effects

24. I therefore think that Crosby and Skilton are wrong to equate the two. They claim that in the final chapter of the BCA, "the aspiring Bodhisattva has finally entered upon the first of the Bodhisattva stages, i.e. through his training in the perfections he has become a Bodhisattva." (Crosby and Skilton 1995) But it seems to me that the BCA indicates that the reader becomes a bodhisattva well before this point — he merely becomes an *alabdhabhūmi* bodhisattva, one who has not reached any stage.

of material possessions, we will see, are never qualified as applying only to bodhisattvas; ordinary people are hurt by possessions too.

The literary forms of the BCA and the ŚS tempt an observer to speculate that the BCA is intended for a less advanced audience and the ŚS for a more advanced. The BCA's language and organization are much clearer than those of the ŚS, and their beauty and poetry is likely more tempting for someone unconvinced of Śāntideva's thought. The ŚS, however, seems to suggest that it is intended for a beginning audience to benefit, as well as perhaps a more advanced. In the section of the ŚS most clearly devoted to explaining the text's purpose, the text claims that

> by one who desires an effect for the sake of practice (*abhyāsa*), effort (*abhiyoga*) should be made with respect to the Śikṣāsamuccaya, with the goal of learning the mere beginning of good conduct, since even the beginning (*ārambha*) of discipline is a great fruit.[25]

The eighteenth chapter of the ŚS gives some account of the end of the path. It gives a fantastical description of the buddhas — their great beauty, virtue and power (ŚS 318-22). Shortly afterwards, it also describes the

25. *yaḥ punar etad abhyāsârthaṃ vyutpāditam icchati | tenâtra śikṣāsamuccaye tāvac caryāmukhamātraśikṣaṇârtham abhiyogaḥ karaṇīyaḥ śikṣârambhasyâiva mahāphalatvāt*, ŚS 16.

qualities of bodhisattvas in similar terms — and at greater length. It is difficult to imagine how a reader who had just become a bodhisattva, taking the vow, could see himself described by these qualities — spontaneously emitting perfumes and garlands and pearls from his body, for example (ŚS 327) — so this is likely the culmination of a long period of effort, the last stages where one becomes a fully realized bodhisattva. The distinctions between buddhas and fully realized bodhisattvas are not clearly spelled out; one suspects that being one of these advanced bodhisattvas is almost as good as being an actual buddha.

Rubrics for the bodhisattva's actions and virtues

What is involved in the bodhisattva path — what is one trying to do? In this section I want to identify the basic rubrics that Śāntideva uses to classify the bodhisattva's actions and virtues, which serve to structure both of his texts.

The ŚS classifies the bodhisattva's actions in a schematic that, as expressed in ŚSK 4, suggests a 4x3 grid: the giving up (*utsarga*), protection, purification, and enhancement of one's person (*ātmabhāva*), enjoyments

(*bhoga*s) and good karma (*puṇya*).[26] The text of the ŚS is structured around this grid. Its first chapter's first section describes itself as explaining the giving up of one's person; the next section identifies itself as explaining the giving up of enjoyments, and the next the giving up of good karma. The text then proceeds through the protection of one's person, the protection of one's enjoyments, and so on up to the enhancement of one's good karma, though some of the topics in the grid get vastly more attention than others. The protection and purification of the person are each the subject of multiple chapters, as is the enhancement of good karma; the other topics make up less than a chapter, with the enhancement of one's person and enjoyments receiving just over a page each (ŚS 273-6).

These terms are, of course, far from transparent, and I will attempt to explain them. Regarding the objects (nouns) in the classification: "one's person," *ātmabhāva*, typically refers to the physical body or its parts, especially when it is being given up — as the kind of gift spoken of in many

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26. *ātmabhāvasya bhogānāṃ tryadhvavṛtteḥ śubhasya ca* | *utsargaḥ sarvasatvebhyas tadrakṣāśuddhivardhanam*, ŚSK 4. Clayton (2006, 39-40) and Bendall (1970, xi) leave out the "giving up" element, making the grid only 3x3, but this element seems central to Śāntideva's own view of his scheme. Mahoney (2002, 15-21) points to it as a central element in the text's classification.

stories of the Buddha's previous lives (on which see Ohnuma 1998; Ohnuma 2000). As Susanne Mrozik (1998, 18-22) notes, however, in other contexts Śāntideva uses *ātmabhāva* to refer to the mind as well. Mrozik renders *ātmabhāva* as "embodied subjectivity" to emphasize its bodily dimension, as opposed to other common translations of the term — she mentions "person" as well as "self," "own being," "individuality" and "personal being." I render *ātmabhāva* with "one's person" because I think it *can* convey the appropriate bodily connotation (as in the phrase "carrying it on his person"), as well as the mental connotation, without being as awkward a construction as "embodied subjectivity."

The term "enjoyments," *bhoga*s, refers to personal property of various kinds. They include personal relationships, at least those of a husband and father with his wife and children, since in his time these were considered to be property. "Good karma" is the accumulated beneficial result of one's good actions, a central idea in Śāntideva's thought. I will discuss it in the following chapter.

The verbs in the grid (giving up, protecting, purifying, enhancing) take on specialized meanings.[27] Each of the latter three is understood not literally,

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27. I will discuss the specialized sense of "giving up" in my fourth

but in the sense of improving those mental states related to or dependent on its object. Richard Mahoney (2002, 38-9) identifies the hermeneutical key to these three terms: they are identified with the four traditional "right strivings" (*samyakprahāṇa*s).[28] These right strivings are traditionally considered to be:

- the non-production of nonexistent bad mental states (*dharma*s);
- the destruction of existing bad mental states;
- the production of nonexistent good mental states; and
- the increase of existing good mental states.

Śāntideva identifies protection (*rakṣā*) with the first of these strivings: "one generates desire and strives for the very non-arising of unarisen karmically bad non-excellent (*akuśala*)[29] mental states... protection is by that

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chapter, as this sense is significantly different from the sense attached to the other three, in a way particularly significant to my concerns in this dissertation.

28. For a helpful discussion of the complex term *samyakprahāṇa* or *samyakpradhāna* and a defence of its translation as "right striving," see Mahoney 2002, 32-5.

29. I explain my translation of *kuśala* as "excellent" later in this chapter, under "Good and bad karma."

means."[30] He then identifies purification (*śuddhi*) with the second: "one creates the desire for the destruction of the unarisen [non-excellent mental states]; purification is by that means."[31] Finally, he identifies enhancement with both the third and the fourth: "One creates desire for the arising of unarisen excellent mental states. And similarly one creates desire for an increased state and for the persistence of arisen [excellent mental states], and so on. Enhancement is by that means."[32]

This abstract and technical classification has important practical consequences. When we interpret protection, purification and enhancement in the light of the right strivings, we can explain some apparently puzzling features of the ŚS. In particular, it allows us to see that "enhancement" for Śāntideva does not directly mean "increase" — the most basic meaning of the Sanskrit *vṛddhi*, and the translation chosen by Bendall and Rouse and by

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30. *atrânutpannānāṃ pāpakānām akuśalānāṃ dharmāṇām anutpādāyâiva chandaṃ janayati vyāyacchati... ity anena rakṣā*, ŚS 356.

31. *utpannānāṃ ca prahāṇāya chandaṃ janayatîty anena śuddhiḥ*, ŚS 356.

32. *anutpannānāṃ kuśalānāṃ dharmāṇām utpādāya chandaṃ janayati | yāvad utpannānāṃ ca sthitaye bhūyobhāvāya chandaṃ janayatîty ādi | anena vṛddhiḥ*, ŚS 356.

Mahoney. What would it mean to "increase one's person"? We see, under this scheme, that in fact to enhance one's person means to generate additional excellent mental states associated with it. More strikingly, under the heading of the enhancement of one's enjoyments or possessions (*bhogavṛddhi*), Śāntideva speaks of giving these enjoyments away (ŚS 275). The traditional translation is absurd on the face of it — how can one *increase* one's possessions by giving them away? When we look at enhancement in the light of the right strivings, we see a much more understandable claim: Śāntideva is telling us that to give one's possessions away increases the good mental states associated with them.

Śāntideva's understanding of these three terms in light of the right strivings also seems to parallel the kind of ethical revaluation that I will discuss in the bulk of the dissertation. One who is not on the bodhisattva path, who has not revalued the objects around him, might well strive to "protect, purify and increase" these objects in a more conventional sense — protect his body from all harm, increase the number of his possessions. For he would see their value in a conventional way. But the bodhisattva revalues everything in terms of the Buddha's teaching and the bodhisattva path, so that protecting the body really means preventing its association with bad

karma, and enhancing possessions really means deriving good karma from them — which may frequently mean having *less* of them.

The bulk of the BCA (chapters VI-IX) corresponds closely to those chapters of the ŚS (IX-XIV) associated with the purification of the person. This fact makes sense because a great deal of the BCA is concerned with eliminating the afflictions (*kleśa*s)[33], which are, in effect, karmically bad (or non-excellent) mental states in oneself.

These chapters of the BCA are concerned respectively with the last four of the six "perfections" (*pāramitā*), the virtues that characterize a bodhisattva.[34] While the first two of these perfections — giving or generosity

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33. I render *kleśa* with "affliction" rather than the more common "defilement" both because the root verb *kliś* means to afflict or torment rather than defile, and because "affliction" catches the idea that *kleśa*s are illnesses of the mind, though perhaps not necessarily "mental illnesses" in the contemporary psychological sense; they are flaws of character that cause the suffering of their bearers.

34. While "afflictions" is one of Śāntideva's favourite rubrics for states he deems bad and "perfections" for states he deems good, he does not spell out the relationship between the two. He does not spell out a one-to-one relationship between the afflictions and the perfections. One could imagine such a relationship to the extent that Śāntideva identifies the afflictions with the standard "three poisons" of desire (*rāga*), anger (*dveṣa*) and delusion (*moha*), as he does on ŚS 209 — these seem to be dealt with specifically in the BCA under the headings of meditative concentration, patient endurance and

(*dāna*) and properly restrained conduct (*śīla*) — do not receive their own chapter headings, they do have an important place in Śāntideva's worldview. Giving has relatively little role in the BCA except for the redirection of good karma, which I will discuss later in this chapter, though it takes pride of place in the first chapter of the ŚS. I will discuss it at greater length in the fourth chapter. Śāntideva hints in BCA V.11 that he considers properly restrained conduct to be the topic of the BCA's fifth chapter, though it is not explicitly identified as such in the chapter's title. Such a topic would fit well with the following four chapters, which identify themselves respectively with the four perfections that follow properly restrained conduct. It also fits with the content of the chapter, which consists largely of precepts and injunctions on personal comportment, reminiscent of the rules of monastic law (*vinaya*).

The third perfection, the topic of BCA VI and ŚS IX, is patient endurance (*kṣānti*), an important topic of this dissertation, as one of the main underpinnings of ethical revaluation. I discuss it at length in my third and

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metaphysical insight, the subjects of chapters VIII, VI and IX respectively. But not only does Śāntideva not spell out this connection, he also often implies that these three are not exhaustive of the afflictions; for example, at BCA V.44 he refers to the *asamprajanyakleśa*, the affliction that is the absence of introspection.

fifth chapters. The fourth perfection, in BCA VII and ŚS X, is heroic strength (*vīrya*), consisting of tireless effort toward the path and generally contrasted with laziness. The fifth perfection, in BCA VIII and ŚS XI-XIII, is meditative concentration (*dhyāna*). To better embody this perfection, one leaves society for a time, finds a quiet place to meditate, and engages in a variety of meditative activities designed to make one's mind more devoted to the tasks of the bodhisattva. Finally, the sixth perfection, in BCA IX and ŚS XIV, is metaphysical insight (*prajñā*), which I discuss at more length in the following chapter.

The present discussion has provided some sense of *what* the bodhisattva is and does, and *how* he comes to be such a being. The next chapter will examine a different but related point of particular significance for my project: *why* one would embark on the project of becoming a bodhisattva and exhibiting the bodhisattva's virtues.

II. Śāntideva's rational ethics

This chapter will demonstrate that Śāntideva has a rational normative ethics — a set of reflections on how one should live, which involves conclusions drawn from reasoning. This characterization of Śāntideva is essential to support my application of his views in chapters 6-7. It also suggests difficulties with claims made about Buddhist ethics (or its lack) by scholars like Damien Keown. To make the point I first explain what I mean by "reason," for the purposes of this dissertation. After that I begin to expound at length the details of Śāntideva's ethical reasoning, in progressively more detail. The bulk of this chapter explores the kinds of reasons that Śāntideva provides for actions, at the most general level — the kinds of rational grounds that underlie all of his ethical prescriptions. In the third chapter I turn more specifically to the reasons for ethical revaluation, and in particular their bases in the ideals of nonattachment and patient endurance. Finally, the fourth and fifth chapters each explore a different apparent contradiction in those reasons. The apparent contradictions suggest at first that Śāntideva's approach may not be rational; but I will use those chapters to show that it is.

We will see that Śāntideva makes several explicit arguments that can address a skeptic and provide premises for his normative conclusions. Such arguments are often viewed as unusual in Buddhist tradition. Damien Keown, for example, makes this strong claim:

> While Buddhist teachings include normative aspects, such as the Five Precepts and the rules of the *Vinaya*, these are typically presented simply as injunctions, rather than as conclusions logically deduced from explicitly stated values and principles. In other words, the Precepts are simply announced, and one is left to figure out the invisible superstructure from which they are derived. Thus although Buddhism has normative teachings, it does not have normative ethics. (Keown 2005, 50)

Whatever the accuracy of this claim with regard to other Buddhist thinkers and texts[35], it falls short with respect to Śāntideva, as this chapter will show. There are indeed some points at which his reasoning is left implicit, but there are others at which it, and its premises, are made quite clear. Even when his arguments are not explicit, I will show that we can most adequately understand his thought by showing an implicit reasoning underlying his claims.

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35. Keown primarily cites the Pali Tipiṭaka to illustrate his claim, and has little to say about other traditions in the article in question. Earlier works of his that do address Mahāyāna traditions (such as Keown 2001) do not make this claim that Buddhism has no normative ethics.

It is true that Śāntideva does not have much of a metaethics, in the sense of a prolonged exploration of the meaning of ethical terms and claims. He has similarly little in the way of *applied* ethics — "concerned with the application of ethical principles to particular problem cases, such as issues in medical ethics like abortion and euthanasia..." (Keown 2005, 50)[36] But normative ethics as Keown (2005, 50) defines it — inquiry that "proposes ways in which we ought to act, or define the kind of lives we ought to lead" in the form of "conclusions logically deduced from explicitly stated values and principles" — this Śāntideva has, in many though not all cases.[37] Given the kind of claims that Keown is making, this point has significant implications for the study of Buddhist ethics in general.

Śāntideva's explicit reasoning demonstrates Keown's claim to be false, at the strong and sweeping level at which he gives it; Buddhism does indeed

36. My later discussions will, I think, suggest an important reason for this apparent lack: applied ethics is concerned above all with the proper conduct of political institutions, and Śāntideva, I will show, gives us normative reasons to avoid concern with these.

37. It is surely for this reason that David Cooper's (Cooper 1998) introductory text excerpts Śāntideva's work as one of "the classic readings" in ethics.

have normative ethics, in this one instance at the very least.[38] However, Keown's writing also suggests a weaker sense of the claim, that Buddhism does not *usually* have normative ethics. One could even use Śāntideva to demonstrate this claim, if one wished, since much of the time even his reasoning is indeed implicit, and his texts are more given to explicit reasoning than are most Buddhist texts on the proper conduct of a life.[39]

In that weaker sense the claim would be defensible; but it could also be misleading. For explicitness is at least arguably inappropriate as a criterion for assessing the existence of normative ethics.[40] The point is important for

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38. I think there are a number of other Buddhist texts which also have a clear normative ethics in this sense — Candrakīrti's commentary on the Catuḥśataka (see Lang 2003) is the most obvious example — but I cannot argue that point here.

39. This point does not, of course, apply to Buddhist *theoretical* philosophy — works on metaphysics, epistemology, logic, philosophy of language — which generally abound in reasoning from explicitly stated premises.

40. Even Western arguments in normative ethics frequently leave many points assumed and unstated, implicit. When conclusions are argued from unstated premises, as happens frequently enough in Śāntideva's work and other Buddhist texts, I see little reason to claim that the texts are thereby not works of normative ethics. The implicitness may bother us more than it bothers the texts' original audience, since some of what is assumed may seem wrong or bizarre to us where it seems commonsensical to them; but

my sixth and seventh chapters. These chapters rely on the claim that Śāntideva gives us reasons for the normative precepts he advocates — which he does, as long as we acknowledge that these reasons can be implicit. It seems important to me to say that even these implicit reasons constitute normative ethics in a significant sense, for we can learn from them and be rationally challenged by them in our own constructive reasoning. That they are not explicitly stated does not mean that they must be outside the pale of ethical reflection — only that we must look a little harder to find them.

A thin concept of rationality

The terms "reason," "rational" and "rationality" can be contentious in the study of comparative ethics, as I will discuss at more length in my sixth chapter. I explain them first here, however, since they are significant for the claims I make in this chapter and those that follow it. In this dissertation I deliberately attempt to give these terms a relatively thin sense, at least in

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it does not seem to me to detract from the texts' status as forms of ethical reasoning.

comparison to some other understandings of them that have previously been articulated; that is, one does not have to accept a great deal of additional ideas in order to accept them. I intend that this thinness will make the cross-cultural arguments of my sixth and seventh chapters both possible and fruitful. In order to keep the thin sense, as I unpack the sense with which I use these terms, I will point to a number of ideas on which my understanding remains neutral or agnostic.

I understand "reason" as the normative force of non-contradiction, as I will explain shortly. Rational thought and action, *qua* rational, are conducted in such a way as to respect this normative force; a rational person thinks and acts with respect for this normative force; a rational argument is an attempt to convince others that relies on this normative force for its effectiveness. "Rationality" is simply the state of being rational, as applied to any of these subjects. *A* reason, in the singular, is a proposition used as a premise in a rational argument — something which, singly or taken together with other premises, would contradict that which one's argument attempts to refute.

In its simplest form, contradiction is the act of affirming both a proposition and its opposite — in formal terms, affirming both *p* and not-*p*. But contradiction can take more complex forms as well. It may involve

affirming a proposition and another proposition that logically *implies* its contrary; or affirming a proposition after having *experience* that implies the proposition's contrary; or affirming a proposition and then *acting* in a way that implies the proposition's contrary; or perhaps even affirming a proposition and feeling an *emotion* that implies its contrary. In each case, however, some propositional content is required for there to be contradiction. If there is knowledge genuinely free of propositional content — a matter on which I am agnostic for present purposes — then it is *non*rational, independent of reason, for to speak of its contradiction or non-contradiction is a category mistake. Contradiction itself is *ir*rational, opposed to reason.

In turn, affirmation of, or belief in, a proposition is, roughly, correspondence between that proposition and the mind — the mind agrees with or assents to the proposition.[41] This correspondence can be stronger or weaker, in the sense of the proposition being more or less frequently (or deeply) present to mind. As we will see later in this chapter, the relative

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41. I am, of course, merely expressing a correspondence theory of *belief*, not a correspondence theory of *truth*. On the latter I am also agnostic here. I am also aware that the term "belief" has an alternate, and older, meaning of "trust" or "faith," as when one claims "I believe in you" (see Smith 1998), but that meaning is not relevant to my discussion here.

strength of beliefs appears to be important for Śāntideva. For he asserts that knowing certain propositions will have significant emotional and soteriological effects, effects which they often do not appear to have for many people who nevertheless appear to believe them. The belief, I will argue, is not strong enough in these cases to have the claimed effect.

As mentioned, on this understanding *experience*, or perception, can contradict a belief. While experience does not itself *affirm* propositions, it nevertheless typically has propositional content; one can usually express a significant portion of what one saw or felt in the form of a proposition that one can affirm or deny. And that propositional content is capable of contradicting other propositions that one may affirm.

Similarly, an *action* can also contradict an affirmed belief. On my understanding, by performing any action, one implicitly affirms that that action is the action that one should take under the circumstances — the best action available, or one of a set of equally good actions available, given the situation as it stands (including limited information). The action has at least this propositional content. I attach no special "moral" sense, or sense of obligation, to this "should"; I am emphatically not affirming a stronger Kantian sense of contradiction. My conception of rationality, by itself,

attempts to be as neutral as possible with respect to any substantive ethical view, including amoral ones. A person who believes lying is always bad, and yet lies when an alternative is available, is being irrational on this understanding. But by the same token, an egoist who believes that he should always do whatever it takes to advance his own financial interests, and yet sacrifices those interests to protect a stranger out of lingering feelings of guilt, is being equally irrational.[42] So, if one continues to believe[43] that one should not do something while still doing it, or vice versa — as in the kinds of situations usually referred to by the Greek term *akrasia* — this is a contradiction. I understand *practical reason* to be the variety of reason associated with rejecting this particular kind of contradiction — contradiction with respect to action. Practical reason is the normative force of non-contradiction in action; akrasia is practical irrationality.

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42. The "always" is important in both these cases. It makes them both into somewhat extreme cases, which is useful to explain the framework I am laying out here. In practice, people's beliefs may (rightly) involve a wide array of exceptions, and this may make rationality or irrationality more difficult to ascertain.

43. I specify "continues to believe" because one's beliefs about proper action may *change* as one learns about a new situation; such an event does not necessarily involve a contradiction, and is therefore not necessarily irrational.

Hubert Dreyfus (2005) and others have suggested that experiences or perceptions consist of more than their propositional content. I suspect that Śāntideva would likely agree with this thesis, given his theory that ultimate truth is inexpressible, as I will discuss later in the chapter. Similarly, Dreyfus notes that intentional action may involve a kind of "nonconceptual coping," so that there is more to any action than can be expressed in propositions. Again, I personally am agnostic on both of these points, which imply a nonrational component in experience and action; their truth need not concern us here. All that is necessary is a point that Dreyfus affirms: that experience and action both can and frequently do have propositional content. Insofar as they do, the action, and one's reaction to the experience, will be rational or irrational and not merely nonrational.

Similar points apply to mental states, especially the states we usually label "emotions." There is some debate over the extent to which emotions have propositional content (for discussions see Nussbaum 2001b; Solomon 2003). But to the extent one's emotions do have such a content, this content is effectively a proposition or set of propositions that the emotion's holder in some sense affirms. (In what follows I think it should be clear that Śāntideva agrees that many states we might call emotions, such as attachment, do

indeed have such a content.) It can therefore contradict other propositions one might affirm, and the absence of such contradiction has a normative force.

By the *normative force* of non-contradiction, I mean the motivating power of the understanding that contradiction is wrong or bad. It is a commonplace that most people tend to be "irrational" in the sense that they frequently hold multiple beliefs that contradict each other, and act in ways that contradict these beliefs. Clearly, on the account of action and practical reason that I have given above, our actions will typically affirm contradictions a great deal of the time. But to be rational in the sense I intend means agreeing that such a state of contradiction is a *problem*. So if a rational person sees a contradiction in her own thoughts and/or practices, she will acknowledge the fact as a difficulty that, at least in principle, she should try to reconcile eventually if possible. It is on this kind of understanding that one is able to *criticize* others' actions. So, to argue rationally to others requires the assumption that they are likely to accept this normative authority — that if one can show them a contradiction in their beliefs and/or practices that they acknowledge to be such, they will also acknowledge that there is a problem, and believe that it would be a good thing to change something in those beliefs or practices, even if they are not sure what.

I hope to show, in my discussions from here until the end of chapter 5, that Śāntideva argues to others in accordance with this thin understanding of rationality. He makes rational arguments for the kind of life, the kind of actions and the kind of mental states that he advocates. Consider, for example, his claim that one will not find joy or happiness when one is angry (BCA VI.3), and the conclusion that one should reject anger. He is assuming that his reader wishes to find joy and happiness, believes these to be good things (again, not necessarily in a "moral" sense). Then, other things being equal, to get angry is bad, and if the reader continues to get angry in situations where he can avoid doing so[44], he is caught in a contradiction. Of course, other things may *not* be equal; the reader may value other things more highly than happiness, and Śāntideva deals with some of those things later in the chapter. Similarly, the reader may not actually be convinced of the premise, that one will not find joy or happiness when angry. For both of these reasons the normative force of non-contradiction will not always catch the reader. But to the extent that it does not, the argument is understandably not effective. The force of the argument, then, is based on reason.

44. That the reader may sometimes not be able to avoid doing so is a matter for practice, as I will discuss later.

Likewise, in chapters 4 and 5 I attempt to show that Śāntideva's work is highly rational in that it does not contradict itself even on certain points that appear to be contradictory at first glance. In so doing I have effectively followed Thomas Kuhn's (1977, xii) methodological or hermeneutical advice that one should "look first for the apparent absurdities" in an important thinker's works and "ask how a sensible person could have written them." I believe, moreover, that I have obtained the payoff Kuhn promises for this method: "When you find an answer, I continue, when those passages make sense, then you may find that more central passages, ones you previously thought you understood, have changed their meaning." By asking how one could believe in the idea of revaluation without contradicting the ideas of compassionate giving or of preventing wrongdoing, I found new interpretations that changed my understanding of Mahāyāna views of compassion and suffering, and which pose a significant counterexample to other widespread understandings.

In chapters 6 and 7 this understanding of rationality will play a somewhat different role, underpinning cross-cultural dialogue. I will show how Nussbaum attempts to find contradictions in the idea of ethical revaluation as she sees it in the Stoics; and I will show that Śāntideva's

understanding of revaluation challenges that view, because the interpretations of chapters 4 and 5 demonstrate that these contradictions are only apparent — so that Nussbaum's attempt to refute revaluation loses much of its normative force on us.

Śāntideva's arguments

What premises does Śāntideva argue from — what ideas must his readers accept for his arguments to work? A number of his arguments do assume a reader who is on the bodhisattva path, or at least accepts some significant portion of it. For example, he points out that the bodhisattva vow is a significant promise, and claims that the karmic consequences of breaking it would therefore be terrible (BCA IV.4-6). Likewise, he argues that anger is worse than desire on the grounds that anger "conduces to the abandoning of beings" whereas desire "conduces to the attraction (*saṃgraha*) of beings."[45] We will see in chapter 4 why attracting beings is important for a bodhisattva;

45. *yo 'yaṃ dveṣôpāle satvaparityāgāya saṃvartate* | *rāgaḥ satva-saṃgrahāya saṃvartate*, ŚS 164.

abandoning them clearly goes against the bodhisattva's compassion. These grounds would seem unconvincing, however, to someone who had not accepted these elements of the bodhisattva path.

Many of Śāntideva's arguments, however, make no such assumption that the reader is already on the path. These arguments seem directed at a reader who is at least somewhat skeptical, who is not yet convinced that acting like a bodhisattva is the best way to live his life. I want to focus in my work on these kinds of arguments, because I assume that most of my readers will not (yet, at least) see themselves as being on the bodhisattva path. The arguments that speak to a non-bodhisattva are thus of particular importance for explaining to my readers what Śāntideva is trying to do. There are, I think, three classes of reasons that speak to such a reader: pleasant and unpleasant mental states; metaphysical insight (*prajñā*); and good and bad karma (*puṇya* and *pāpa*). I will explain in turn what each of these classes consists of, how it works, and how it relates to the other two.

Pleasant and unpleasant mental states

Śāntideva's most straightforward arguments are based on the pleasant or unpleasant mental states — especially happiness (*sukha*) and suffering

(*duḥkha*) — that one will experience as a result of one's bodhisattva-like or non-bodhisattva-like conduct, respectively. I will focus on these sorts of arguments when I apply Śāntideva's work to a contemporary ethical context in the sixth and seventh chapters, as I think they are the most portable across cultural boundaries.

For Śāntideva, suffering (*duḥkha*, more commonly spelled *duṣkha* in the ŚS) is a ubiquitous feature of the life of beings in the universe, yet it is effectively preventable. He claims that one should become invincible to suffering (*duḥkha-duryodhana*, BCA VI.18); one kind of patient endurance, as we will see in the next chapter, is effectively an attempt to achieve this goal.

Perhaps the most extreme example of a claim based on happiness and suffering is Śāntideva's promise of a meditative state (*samādhi*) that he refers to as the Sarvadharmasukhakrānta (meaning "the production of happiness toward all phenomena"). (ŚS 181-2) I will discuss this state in more detail in the next chapter; but it is notable in the present context because it suggests that the bodhisattva is able to maintain happiness in every situation, even literally hellish tortures, the kind one might experience in the hells.

Suffering has a strong normative force for Śāntideva; that suffering is bad and worthy of prevention, he takes for granted, and believes his audience will as well. Based on the Buddhist theory that the self is unreal (realization of this theory being a form of metaphysical insight), Śāntideva argues that one should prevent others' suffering on the grounds that there is no difference between one's own suffering and others'; when an imagined objector asks why suffering should be prevented at all, he responds: "because there is no dispute for anyone."[46] Or, in Crosby and Skilton's (1995, 97) more fluid translation: "no one disputes that!" I find it hard to imagine a clearer example of the normative ethics that Keown is looking for, a claim about how we should live which is deduced from explicitly stated values and principles.

It is not hard to see the intuitive force of Śāntideva's claim about suffering; while one might come up with exceptions, in general most human beings in most contexts have viewed suffering as something bad and undesirable. The point can extend to unpleasant mental states that Śāntideva does not explicitly refer to in terms of suffering. So, for example, when he makes the psychological claim that "the mind does not get peace, nor

46. *duḥkhaṃ kasmān nivāryaṃ cet sarveṣām avivādataḥ*, BCA VIII.103.

enjoy pleasure and happiness, nor find sleep or satisfaction, when the dart of anger rests in the heart,"[47] even a reader who is not convinced of the bodhisattva path can see powerful reasons to avoid anger.

Śāntideva makes a case for altruism on the grounds of happiness as well: "All who are suffering in the world [are suffering] because of desire for their own happiness. All who are happy in the world [are happy] because of desire for others' happiness."[48] When he makes this psychological claim, he does not explain how it is supposed to work. I think its workings, however, can be explained partially by the theory of nonattachment (*aparigraha*) as I will discuss it in my third and fourth chapters; such a connection is suggested further by the claim that there is a "pain and internal burning for one deeply attached to himself (*svâbhiṣvāṅga*)."[49] Concern for oneself and one's own

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47. *manaḥ śamaṃ na gṛhṇāti na prītisukhaṃ aśnute | na nidrām na dhṛtim yāti dveśaśalye hṛdi sthite*, BCA VI.3. Luis Gómez (1999, 276-81) selects this verse as an example for his interesting discussion of translation problems. I have tried to remain close to the Sanskrit in my translations for the purpose of this dissertation, so the translation here is deliberately more literal, or "mechanical" (in Gómez's terms), than Gómez's discussion recommends.

48. *ye kecid duḥkhitā loke sarve te svasukhêcchayā | ye kecit sukhitā loke sarve te 'nyasukhecchayā*, BCA VIII.129.

49. *svâbhiṣvaṅgasyântardāhaḥ śokaḥ*, ŚS 222.

particular interests leads to painful feelings of grief, loss, fear when, as inevitably happens, those interests are harmed. I also see some explanation for this claim in Śāntideva's metaphysical ideas, as I will discuss below.

Śāntideva's arguments based on happiness and suffering pose one central problem: namely, that bodhisattvas still suffer in a sense, because of their compassion for others. He claims: "Just as one whose body is on fire has no joy at all, even through all pleasures, exactly so there is no way to joy with respect to the distress of beings, for those made of compassion."[50] If this compassion is so painful that it can be compared to being ablaze, is it really any more pleasant to be a bodhisattva than to be an ordinary person?

Śāntideva recognizes this objection in the text of the ŚS. To an imagined objector who asks "If great suffering comes through compassion, why produce effort?" he replies: "Having examined this suffering of the world, how great is the suffering from compassion?"[51] That is, the suffering of the

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50. *ādīptakāyasya yathā samantān na sarvakāmair api saumanasyam* । *sattvavyathāyām api tadvad eva na prītyupāyo 'sti dayāmayānām*, BCA VI.123. The same verse is repeated at ŚS 156, with the only difference being that "for those made of compassion" (*dayāmayānām*) is replaced by "for greatly compassionate ones" (*mahākṛpānām*). Another very similar claim appears on ŚS 166.

51. *kṛpayā bahu duṣkhaṃ cet kasmād utpādyate balāt* ।

compassionate bodhisattva is much smaller than that which he alleviates in the world. This reply, however, would not likely satisfy a selfish objector, one who aimed only to prevent his own suffering and not that of others. Śāntideva also replies to such objectors, but the response depends on metaphysical insight, to which I now turn.

Metaphysical insight

Much of Śāntideva's arguments involve the kind of claims that can be classified as a form of knowledge called *prajñā*, the perfection or virtue (*pāramitā*) which is the topic of the BCA's ninth chapter. I have chosen to render this complex term into English as "metaphysical insight." I choose "insight" to emphasize the depth and transformative nature of this knowledge — as we will see, Śāntideva makes strong claims about the effects that *prajñā* has on its bearer, so that it is classified as a perfection alongside patient endurance and properly restrained conduct. I choose the term "metaphysical" to emphasize the specific content of this knowledge: claims about the nature of reality. This is a relatively loose and nontechnical sense of

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jagadduṣkhaṃ nirūpyêdaṃ kṛpāduṣkhaṃ kathaṃ bahu, ŚS 360.

the term "metaphysics" that one may find in introductory textbooks on philosophy — for example, "Metaphysics is the attempt to say what reality is" (Solomon 2006, 113).

Metaphysical insight, in Śāntideva's sense, involves the recognition that all things, especially the self, are empty (*śūnya*) and dependently originated (*pratītyasamutpanna*) — they have no essential or abiding existence. Śāntideva's emphasis on this view is characteristic of the Madhyamaka Buddhist school of thought. Śāntideva's approach is somewhat unusual in drawing ethical conclusions directly from these metaphysical premises — an approach that, although relatively infrequent, does have some parallels such as the *Catuḥśataka* commentary of Śāntideva's rough contemporary Candrakīrti (see Lang 2003).[52]

The Madhyamaka approach does not lend itself easily to foundational arguments, in the stricter sense of attempts to definitively establish a position from which other claims can be deduced. Any such position would

52. Many Buddhist texts draw *soteriological* conclusions of some sort from metaphysical premises — the nature of the universe is such that everyday life is filled with suffering but one can be liberated from it. But the metaphysics does not usually lead directly to a conclusion about how one should conduct oneself in life, as Śāntideva's metaphysics does.

itself be considered empty and therefore in some sense flawed. Indeed, an earlier Madhyamaka text, the Vigrahavyāvartani of Nāgārjuna, famously refuted its opponents by proclaiming: "If I had any position, then I would have a flaw [in my argument]. But I have no position; therefore I have no flaw at all."[53] Rather, the approach is intended to be purely dialectical and critical, examining alternative positions and knocking them down, as Śāntideva does in BCA IX.

Claims to have no position seem absurd at first glance, especially when associated with a thinker like Śāntideva who makes many positive claims. Śāntideva's response relies on a common Madhyamaka approach of making a distinction between conventional (*saṃvṛti*) and ultimate (*paramārtha*) truth (e.g. BCA IX.2). The ultimate truth is inexpressible (*anabhilāpya*), untaught (*adeśita*) and unmanifest (*aprakāśita*, ŚS 256); it is nonconceptual, and therefore nonrational. But because we are caught up in illusion, seeing substance, we still need to make provisional statements at a conventional level to make ourselves and others aware of this illusion and get ourselves out of it. Since the ultimate truth is inexpressible, all of Śāntideva's actual claims

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53. *yadi kācana pratijñā syān me tata eṣa me bhaved doṣaḥ* | *nâsti ca mama pratijñā tasmān nâivāsti me doṣaḥ*, VV 29.

need to be understood at the conventional level.

I think that this distinction helps to hold up the arguments from happiness and suffering, as described in the previous section. We saw that even bodhisattvas suffer greatly from compassion, thus casting suspicion on any sense that becoming a bodhisattva will free one from suffering. But this claim, like any other, is at the conventional level of truth. Śāntideva argues that suffering itself is unreal (BCA IX.88-91); but only one who realizes the ultimate truth, it seems, will be able to really recognize this unreality. This recognition, I suspect, is the way in which it is possible for suffering to end, as the Third Noble Truth of Buddhism promises. It is also, I think, part of the reason that Śāntideva proclaims that happy people are happy because they desire others' happiness — a bodhisattva, who has lost the illusion of self, can also lose the illusion of suffering and thereby escape it.

If suffering is unreal, however, one may wonder why it should be prevented. This point also seems to depend on the conventional/ultimate distinction. The conventional truth's ultimate unreality makes it an illusion. But, Śāntideva responds, "even an illusion exists as long as the complete

collection of its causal conditions"[54]; the suffering still exists *within* the illusion in which we find ourselves, and it is experienced as something bad which needs to be prevented.

Metaphysical insight allows for a further response to a selfish objector, in Śāntideva's famous refutation of egoism. Because the self is empty and unreal, it makes little sense to protect only oneself from suffering and not others. There is no self that endures from moment to moment, so one's own future self is as different from one's present self as other beings are: "If [someone else] is not protected because his suffering cannot hurt me — the sufferings of a future body are not mine. Why is that hurt protected against?"[55]

Paul Williams (1998, 30) notes that most commentators, including Prajñākaramati, have read this verse so that the "future body" (*āgāmikāya*) means only the bodies one will inhabit in future rebirths, not the future state of one's body in the present life. A literal reading of this verse and the next would suggest that they are right; the next verse adds that "one is dead, a

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54. *yāvat pratyayasāmagrī tāvan māyâpi vartate*, BCA IX.14.

55. *tadduḥkhena na me bādhet yato yadi na rakṣyate* | *nâgāmikāyaduḥkhān me bādhā tat kena rakṣyate*, BCA VIII.97.

very different other one is born."[56] So Williams thinks that "from a textual point of view" this verse must be correct. I am not so sure, however. Later Tibetan commentators, especially rGyal-tshab-rje, interpret the verse as I have, so that it could refer to any present suffering one might try to prevent. (Williams 1998, 32-6) The "death" and "birth" would likely then refer to the body's non-enduring nature — its dying as the present moment passes away and being reborn anew in the following moment — rather than to literal death and rebirth. Logically this seems a much more satisfying reading. The argument seems entirely superfluous if it refers only to future births; based on everything else that Śāntideva says, one concerned with better future births needs above all to prevent others' suffering in the first place.

Beyond the argument about future selves, even the present self should be broken up into its parts: to an opponent who objects that one who suffers should only prevent the suffering that belongs to him, Śāntideva retorts: "the foot's suffering is not the hand's. Why does [the hand] protect [the foot]?"[57]

Metaphysical insight has three major ethical and soteriological

56. *anya eva mṛto yasmād anya eva prajāyate*, BCA VIII.98.

57. *yadi yasyâiva yad duḥkhaṃ rakṣyaṃ tasyâiva tan matam* | *pādaduḥkhaṃ na hastasya kasmāt tat tena rakṣyate*, BCA VIII.99.

implications for Śāntideva. First, as we just saw, knowing the nonexistence of self should lead one to benefit others. Second, as we will see in the next chapter, one who knows dependent origination can become more patient with others' wrongdoing, because he will know to avoid blaming them. Finally, "one who knows emptiness is not emotionally attached to worldly phenomena, because he is independent [of them]"[58]; recognizing the emptiness of things allows one to attach less significance to them.

These implications, for Śāntideva, are not merely a matter of logical implication. There is also a practical, cause-and-effect relationship between one's realization of the metaphysical claims and one's actions and mental states. In the passage quoted above, it is not merely that one who knows emptiness knows that he *should not be* emotionally attached to worldly phenomena, but further that he *is not* so attached (*na saṃhriyate*). Elsewhere in the text he makes other, similar, causal claims that metaphysical insight *will* cause one to feel and act differently. For example, after having made a series of logical arguments for the equivalence of self and other, he immediately comes to add: "Those whose mental dispositions are developed *in*

58. *na śūnyatāvādī lokadharmaiḥ saṃhriyate 'niśritatvāt*, ŚS 264.

this way (*evaṃ*), for whom the suffering of others is equal to their loves, go down into the Avīci hell like geese [into] a lotus pond."[59] That is, it is specifically hearing the arguments that develops one's mind to treat others' suffering equally to one's own. Metaphysical insight is not merely an idea added to a stock of knowledge, which one can do with as one pleases; it has direct consequences for one's emotional states.

Such a view seems perplexing to contemporary Western ears, including some informed by Buddhism. Understanding ideas often seems not to have this liberating effect. David Burton puts the problem well, in terms of his personal experience:

> I do not seem to be ignorant about the impermanence of entities. I appear to understand that entities have no fixed essence and that they often change in disagreeable ways. I seem to understand that what I possess will fall out of my possession. I apparently accept that all entities must pass away. And I seem to acknowledge that my craving causes suffering. Yet I am certainly not free from craving and attachment.... How, then, might one preserve the common Buddhist claim that knowledge of the three characteristics of existence[60] results in liberation in

59. *evaṃ bhāvitasaṃtānāḥ paraduḥkhasamapriyāḥ* | *avīcim avagāhante haṃsāḥ padmavanaṃ yathā*, BCA VIII.107. Emphasis in translation is mine.

60. i.e. non-self, impermanence and suffering. Burton is relying on mainstream Buddhist accounts, which stress different characteristics of

the face of this objection? (Burton 2004, 31)

Burton explores several potential hypotheses to resolve his question. The one which seems to come closest to Śāntideva's view, he places under the heading of "insufficient attentiveness and reflection." That is, that for those who have not experienced the beneficial ethical, emotional or soteriological consequences that are presumed to accrue from knowledge of Buddhist ideas, their belief in such ideas "is something they have thought about from time to time perhaps, but they do not bring it to mind often enough." (Burton 2004, 48-9)

Śāntideva suggests such a hypothesis in two ways. First, he frequently mentions the shifting and changing nature of the mind; for example, quoting the Ratnacūḍa Sūtra, he notes that the mind is "like a river flow, unstable, broken up and dissolved when produced," and "like lightning, unsteadily cut off in a moment."[61] Second, within the chapter of the BCA on metaphysical

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existence than Śāntideva does — especially, emptiness *per se* does not figure — but given the claims that Śāntideva makes, the problem is the same in both cases.

61. *cittaṃ hi kāśyapa nadīsrotaḥsadṛśam anavasthitam utpannabhagnavilīnam... cittaṃ hi kāśyapa vidyutsadṛśaṃ kṣaṇabhaṅgânavasthitam*, ŚS 234.

insight, he speaks of "cultivating," or meditating on, arguments: "this reasoning (*vicāra*) is meditated on as an antidote to that [fixation on imagination]."[62] This point is reinforced elsewhere in the text; his most famous metaphysical argument, on the equivalence of self and other (BCA VIII.90-119), occurs in the context of a particular meditation, within the BCA's chapter on meditation (*dhyāna*). We will see the importance of meditative and other practices for cognitive change again later in the dissertation. It is not enough, for Śāntideva, to find an argument persuasive and then move on to other things; it must be fixed in one's mind. In the terms I presented earlier in the chapter, the belief must be strong enough for these effects to take place; a weak belief will not be sufficient.

The evidence of Śāntideva's claims on this point, I would argue, stands in sharp contrast to John Pettit's closing claim that "the purpose of the BCA is, in large part, to clear up reason to make room for meditation." (Pettit 1999, 134) The two activities of reasoning and meditating, for Śāntideva, are not so separable if one wants to achieve metaphysical insight, and he does not privilege one over the other in this way.

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62. *vicāro 'yaṃ pratipakṣo 'sya bhāvyate*, BCA IX.92.

Good and bad karma

I will use the terms "good karma" and "bad karma," respectively, to translate the Sanskrit terms *puṇya* and *pāpa*. These terms refer to a sort of ethical causality: the process by which ethically good and bad actions (respectively) have positive and negative results. (These results most frequently, but not only, include better and worse rebirths.) The terms appear very frequently in Śāntideva's work — often as justifications for acting and feeling in a certain way.

Since the nineteenth century the contrasting terms *puṇya* and *pāpa* have typically been rendered into English with the Christian concepts of "merit" and "sin" respectively, neither of which does justice to the corresponding Sanskrit concept. As other scholars of Buddhism (Harvey 2000, 18; Clayton 2006, 49-50) have rightly noted, the English word "merit" has strong connotations of desert or entitlement which do not apply to *puṇya*, as the latter refers to the impersonal power of action to produce happy or fortunate results, without an actor (such as a deity or an institution) rewarding the deserving. "Sin" is also an awkward translation for *pāpa*, since Buddhist *pāpa* is clearly juxtaposed as the negative antithesis to *puṇya* while "sin" has no clear opposite — except perhaps for "grace," a far removed

concept which does not correspond with the agent's actions and their results.

In the context of nineteenth-century English usage, "merit" and "sin" might perhaps have been the closest English concepts available to render *puṇya* and *pāpa*, despite the aforementioned flaws. The twentieth century, however, has seen the Sanskrit word *karma*, especially in the phrases "good karma" and "bad karma," enter the English language in widespread popular usage, first in works explaining South Asian traditions and then more widely in a New Age context. The popular English usage of "good and bad karma" refers to the good and bad fruits of one's actions, which come back to affect one positively or negatively in the future.[63] This usage corresponds exactly to the meaning of the Buddhist terms *puṇya* and *pāpa*, even though those terms do not themselves involve the Sanskrit word *karma* (which simply means "action"). There is, at any rate, no disputing the close connection between Sanskrit *karma*, on the one hand, and *puṇya* and *pāpa* on the other; the latter are typically referred to in Sanskrit as *karmaphala*, the fruits of action. Therefore I translate *puṇya* and *pāpa* as "good karma" and "bad karma"

63. As one random example of this usage, the graduate student café at Harvard, with no significant Buddhist theme, displays to its customers a tip jar labelled "Tipping brings good karma."

respectively.[64]

L.S. Cousins (1996, 153-6) explores the development of these concepts (including *puṇya*'s Pali form *puñña*) in early South Asian texts. In the oldest texts, he notes, *puṇya* and *pāpa* were "simply that which causes happiness or harm respectively," irrespective of individual action (and were therefore not connected to an understanding of *karma*.) However, he agrees that they soon enough come to develop that association with the result of individual actions, and develop a sense of good and bad as well; in Śāntideva's usage they have all of these associations.

When Śāntideva speaks of good and bad karma, his usage suggests an internal connection between virtue or ethical excellence and well-being, though not entirely conclusively. That is to say, he often uses these terms in a way that suggests that virtue *is* well-being in many significant senses. He does this by using *puṇya* in ways that make it equivalent both to virtue or excellence and to well-being or flourishing.

Good karma seems equivalent to "excellence" in the sense of the Sanskrit term *kuśala*. Edgerton (1970b, 188) notes that Buddhist texts

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64. When they are used as adjectives, I rely on the slightly more awkward "karmically good" and "karmically bad."

frequently equate *puṇya* with *kuśala*, and Śāntideva seems to follow this usage. For example, when he discusses the redirection (*pariṇāmanā*) of good karma (which I will discuss shortly), he speaks of redirecting *kuśala* itself, as if this were the exact same thing (ŚS 296-7).

And what is *kuśala*? The term has strong connotations of both skill and ethical goodness. Different scholars have chosen to emphasize different aspects of the term (and its Pali form *kusala*), and argued accordingly. Where Cousins (1996) and Clayton (2006, 67-72) argue that it (when used as an adjective) should be rendered "skillful," Damien Keown (2001, 119-20) argues for "good" or perhaps "virtuous." Each scholar, however, acknowledges that the term has connotations in both directions.

For this reason, I would argue that *kuśala* is best translated as "excellence," or "excellent" in adjectival form. I adopt "excellence" based on suggestions from work in Greek ethics. Since both Clayton and Keown relate Buddhist thought to Greek virtue ethics, I am surprised that neither directly draws a connection between *kuśala* and the classical Greek term *aretē*, which is often rendered with the English "virtue" (e.g. Hardie 1980). *Aretē*, like *kuśala*, has a strong connotation of both skillfulness and ethical goodness. Homer uses it for "excellence of any kind; a fast runner displays the aretē of

his feet... and a son excels his father in every kind of aretē — as athlete, as soldier and in mind (Iliad 15.642).” (MacIntyre 1984, 122) Aristotle, too, uses *aretē* for strengths of the intellect as well as ethical “virtues” *per se*; for this reason, Nussbaum (2001a, 6) renders it as “excellence,” in order to catch this double sense of being “good at” both ethical behaviour and other, more specific, skills.

I think that “excellence” as a translation of *kuśala* goes some way toward addressing both Keown’s insistence on its moral dimensions and Clayton’s insistence on its instrumental dimensions. Clayton (2006, 72) herself says that to translate *kuśala* “ideally we need a word that means both inherently valuable and good and instrumentally useful and intelligent.” “Excellent,” I would suggest, is exactly this. “Excellence” also allows for a more consistent translation of *upāyakauśalya*, the bodhisattva’s ability to adjust his teaching and practice to the needs of other beings, as “excellence in means”; despite Keown’s general insistence that *kuśala* means “good” and not “skillful,” he nevertheless renders its nominalization in *upāyakauśalya* as “skillful means” without further comment (Keown 2001, 150), perhaps because “goodness in means” is quite awkward. The main drawback I see of “excellence” is that the adjective form “excellent” is now normally used as

slang meaning "very good" in any sense, but I hope that this will not be overly confusing given the term's other advantages.[65]

Beyond excellence in this more general sense, Śāntideva also equates good karma with what might be called moral virtue in a much stricter sense — properly restrained conduct, or *śīla*. This term's referent in Buddhist literature typically includes the kind of restraints on behaviour that are identified with morality in the West — not killing, not stealing, not lying (see Keown 2001, 25-57 for a more detailed discussion). And on ŚS 146-8 Śāntideva uses it interchangeably with *puṇya* as well.

It seems fair to me, then, to say that Śāntideva frequently equates good karma with virtue. Even more frequently, however, he equates it with well-being or welfare, *śubha*; on this point I am indebted to Clayton's (2006, 48-51) discussion. In discussions of the three things that one must give up, protect, purify and enhance, the third thing listed is sometimes *puṇya* and sometimes

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65. I am not entirely sure that the slang use poses a great problem, either. I cannot resist pointing to the surprisingly (and no doubt unintentionally) felicitous slang usage in the movie *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure*, where the main characters use the term "excellent" both to describe the music they find skillfully done ("Iron Maiden? Excellent!") and morally good behaviour toward others ("Be excellent to each other, and party on, dudes.")

śubha; Śāntideva frequently uses *śubha* in these senses that clearly mean good karma. But in wider Sanskrit usage, *śubha* has the more general sense of well-being, good fortune, happiness, welfare, prosperity, flourishing — similarly to the earlier usage of *puṇya*, as I noted above in discussing Cousins. This equivalence suggests a sense in which, on Śāntideva's understanding, good karma not only produces well-being, but *is* well-being — constitutive of a good life, at least at the level of conventional truth. There does remain some ambiguity, however, in the sense that Śāntideva's work also suggests that well-being is the *product* of the result or "ripening" (*vipāka*) of good karma.

This ambiguity may be compared to that in Greek conceptions of *eudaimonia*, which also means human welfare or flourishing, but includes a strong element of excellence (*aretē*) as well. To the extent that good karma is equated with excellence, Śāntideva's thought resembles that of the Stoics, who thought that excellence alone constituted well-being. To the extent that good karma is equated with the results of excellent action, however, it looks more like Aristotle's view, where "external goods," outside the control of the agent's excellence or lack thereof, are intrinsic components of well-being.[66]

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66. For book-length discussions of these points, see Nussbaum 1994b

However, Śāntideva does not ever suggest, as Aristotle does, that everyone aims at well-being but not everyone knows what it is (NE 1095a).

In addition, the conceptual distinction between external and internal goods, as found in Greek thought, is somewhat problematic for Śāntideva. Since Śāntideva explains "external" events in terms of karma (see BCA VI.47, for example), over the course of multiple lifetimes nothing is completely "external" for him;[67] and conversely, because of his deterministic view of action as expressed in BCA VI.22-32 (discussed further in my third and seventh chapters), nothing is fully "internal" either. This point could suggest that what seems to be ambiguity may in some sense be deliberate: there is no clear distinction to be made between action and its result.

But however we interpret the relation between action and result, I suggest that for Śāntideva good karma, as a complex of virtue and well-being, effectively constitutes its own intrinsic reason for action, as *eudaimonia* does. That a given action or mental state is karmically good, and that it is good *per se*, seem to be one and the same; I have found no point at which Śāntideva

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and Nussbaum 2001a. The ideas of these books will figure as the central topic of my seventh chapter, in a different way than they do here.

67. I am indebted on this point to Andy Housiaux.

makes any claim of the form "one should refrain from an action or mental state in spite of the good karma it generates," or "one should have an action or mental state even though it is karmically bad."

Indeed, there are a number of cases where it would *seem* like Śāntideva is saying it is not good to have more good karma, but in nearly all such cases, he actually ends up saying that the apparent loss of good karma turns out to bring *more* good karma. We will see one such paradox in my third and fifth chapters: when others destroy one's good karma it can be a good thing, but that is because patiently enduring such destruction generates even more good karma.[68]

Similarly, Śāntideva says that bodhisattvas should be willing to perform acts that will bring them bad rebirths. For example, he praises the monk Jyotis, who had sex with a woman out of compassion for her, breaking his monastic vows in order to please her; Jyotis was ready to enter the hells for his act, but did it anyway, the text claims, to alleviate her suffering (ŚS

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68. There seems to be only one sense in which good karma could be said not to be good, which I will discuss shortly: namely, that good karma is itself only a part of the conventional truth to be in some sense transcended. But because the ultimate truth is so ineffable, one cannot really speak of anything being good or bad at that level — one cannot really speak of anything at all. Insofar as anything is really good, good karma is.

167). This would seem to be Śāntideva enjoining a karmically bad act. But this exception ends up proving the rule. He goes on to say that because of its motivation in compassion, such an act paradoxically leads to a *good* rebirth: "The act which for others would lead to hell, would lead to a birth in the Brahma-world for a bodhisattva with excellence in means (*upāyakuśala*)."[69] Another similar paradox holds in the case of redirecting good karma, the topic to which I now turn.

The redirection (*pariṇāmanā*) of good karma is a central part of Śāntideva's understanding of karma's workings. He urges his readers to redirect any good karma that they acquire, so that it does not merely result in a worldly form of well-being, such as a more prosperous rebirth for oneself. This redirection can sometimes be to ensure that the good karma brings one closer to awakening instead of worldly rebirths (*bodhipariṇāmanā*, ŚS 158).[70] More frequently, though, it means the giving up of one's good karma to others (*puṇyotsarga*). This is a common idea in Buddhist texts. Buddhist stories

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69. *yad anyeṣāṃ nirayasaṃvartanīyaṃ karma* | *tad upāyakuśalasya bodhisatvasya brahmalokôpapattisaṃvartanīyam iti*, ŚS 167.

70. Studies of karmic redirection (often called "merit transfer") often neglect this first form; see Kajiyama 1989 for a discussion of it.

often emphasize the supernatural nature of karmic redirection. Especially, they commonly claim or imply that ghosts (*preta*s or *peta*s) are incapable of receiving physical gifts. If one wishes to give them something, it must be one's good karma. (Kajiyama 1989, 7-8)

Still, even here it is not the case that good karma is a bad thing. Redirecting good karma itself leads one to have more of it.[71] But even the good karma acquired this way must itself be redirected as best one can: "No ripening should be desired even of the good karma which itself arises from giving good karma — except for another's sake."[72]

The giving of good karma clearly plays a major role in Śāntideva's work. The closing chapter of the BCA, entitled *Pariṇāmanā*, consists largely of a set of wishes for others' benefit, which the speaker hopes will come out of his good karma. Its ultimate position in the text leads some observers to see it as taking on paramount importance in Śāntideva. Har Dayal (1970, 189-90), for instance, claims that Śāntideva *substituted* karmic redirection for

71. The workings of good karma in Śāntideva's text remind me a great deal of the children's song "Magic Penny," written by Malvina Reynolds: "Love is something if you give it away / You end up having more."

72. *puṇyadānād api yat puṇyaṃ tato 'pi na vipākaḥ prārthanīyo 'nyatra parârthāt*, ŚS 147.

metaphysical insight as the ultimate goal of the bodhisattva path.

I think Dayal's claim is far overstated, however. As I will demonstrate in the fourth chapter, gifts, though important, pose problems on Śāntideva's view. Material possessions create the danger of attachment, and even good karma can itself ripen merely as such material possessions in a future life (ŚS 298), especially if it is left unredirected. For this reason it can turn out to be dangerous, like any other gift. Also like other gifts, its purpose is to lead others onto the bodhisattva path, so that their suffering can ultimately be eliminated; it is not intrinsically beneficial. In addition, Clayton (2006, 83) correctly notes that karmic redirection and metaphysical insight are interconnected, since attaining metaphysical insight is one of the (karmically) best actions one can undertake.

Metaphysical insight, moreover, has a somewhat paradoxical relationship with good karma, as it does with other aspects of the Buddhist path. Śāntideva claims, after all, that good and bad karma themselves arise out of illusion (BCA IX.11); like everything else we can speak of, they are ultimately empty.

Clayton (2006, 97-8) seems to think that this point implies that ethical action, good karma, or eliminating suffering are unnecessary or insignificant.

She quotes Richard Hayes (1994, 38) to the effect that maintaining a sense of the importance of ethics in such a philosophy is merely "philosophical rigour and integrity being compromised by the perceived need to preserve a social institution." She finds herself "not quite cynical enough" to doubt Śāntideva's sincerity in accordance with Hayes's quote, but provides no alternative explanation for why Śāntideva might have still believed in ethical action.

It seems to me that Śāntideva has a powerful way to avoid any such antinomianism, however. His point that good and bad karma arise from illusion is itself a response to an objector's claim that there is no bad karma when one kills an illusory person, because that person's mind does not really exist.[73] He is showing us that all such things exist at the level of conventional truth — but they have a force on us because we experience the world conventionally. Śāntideva goes on here to add a point we have already noted: that "even an illusion exists as long as the collection of its causal conditions."[74] Insofar as we are caught in an illusion, we are suffering, and that suffering is real within the context of an illusion; one might compare it to the suffering experienced in a nightmare. Ultimately the suffering in a

73. *māyāpuruṣaghātâdau cittâbhāvān na pāpakaṃ*, BCA IX.11.

74. *yāvat pratyayasāmagrī tāvan māyâpi vartate*, BCA IX.14.

dream is illusory, but it remains a good thing to wake people up because they *experience* the suffering as real. And while the waking up and the bodhisattva who wakes the dreamer are themselves unreal too, they *appear* to be real at the level of conventional truth; and for those of us who are trapped in conventional truth, that is what matters.

III. Ethical revaluation as a consequence of nonattachment and patient endurance

Now that we have seen the general varieties of rational argument that Śāntideva's ethics employs, I will show how he deploys such arguments to convince his audience of the idea of ethical revaluation. At the end of the chapter, I will show what ethical revaluation is, and how it follows for Śāntideva as a consequence of the twin ideals of nonattachment and patient endurance. In order to do this, I will first explain how Śāntideva's arguments take us to those ideals, and what the ideals respectively consist of.

The idea of ethical revaluation is at the heart of this dissertation. It is ethical revaluation which poses the apparent contradictions that are resolved in the next two chapters; it is the resolution of those contradictions, together with the idea of ethical revaluation itself, which challenges common understandings of key concepts in Mahāyāna ethics such as compassion and suffering. So too, the seventh chapter will offer a qualified defence of ethical revaluation, showing that contemporary arguments effectively attempt to show contradictions in ethical revaluation but do not succeed.

It is important, then, to show what ethical revaluation is, as this

chapter will do. Since the dissertation's focus is on Śāntideva's rational ethics, it is also important to show his reasoning for the idea; and since this reasoning depends largely on nonattachment and patient endurance, it is further important to show how he develops these ideals. "Ethical revaluation" is an outsider ("etic") concept, not one that is familiar to Śāntideva, but one that helps focus and organize our understanding of his thought. However, nonattachment and patient endurance — or at least their Sanskrit equivalents *aparigraha* and *kṣānti* — are Śāntideva's own ("emic") concepts, and it is because of them that the idea of ethical revaluation makes sense as a way of understanding Śāntideva's thought. So I explore each of the two in some detail.

Moreover, I want to give some sense here of the richness of those two ideals, beyond the argument alone. In the first two chapters we saw broader outlines of Śāntideva's own thought, as a context in which these arguments were made. Here, I want to widen that context somewhat by paying some attention to the way nonattachment and patient endurance are presented in South Asian and Buddhist tradition more generally, the kinds of discussions that Śāntideva is drawing from in elaborating his positions.

For similar reasons, I will pay some attention to the way that ethical

revaluation is realized in practice. We have seen already how, for Śāntideva, having the right beliefs has a powerful beneficial effect on one's mind — but only if the beliefs are strong enough. He suggests various meditative practices to develop the idea of mental renunciation in one's mind, which I will also explore here.

Nonattachment

Concepts of attachment and nonattachment

I will use "attachment" and "nonattachment" to render Śāntideva's Sanskrit terms *parigraha* and *aparigraha*, respectively. The term *parigraha* occurs 77 times in Śāntideva's works, including its opposite *aparigraha*. *Parigraha* literally means "grasping," or "grasping around," and so *aparigraha* means "non-grasping." *Parigraha* often refers simply to a possession or possessions, things that one owns. But it also takes an additional meaning of the *sense* of ownership, the sense of possession. To indicate this latter sense, Śāntideva sometimes specifies the term *parigrahabuddhi*, "sense of possession," but more frequently he drops the *buddhi* and uses *parigraha* to refer to this mental state as well (e.g. BCA

VIII.134). He conveys the double sense of the term to some extent by equating *parigraha* with mamatva, literally “mine-ness” (ŚS 19).

The double sense of the term is hardly unique to Śāntideva. In the Pali form *pariggaha*, it is found with both of these meanings in the Saṃyutta Nikāya (SN 779, 805). One finds a similar ambiguity in non-Buddhist traditions. *Aparigraha* is the fifth of the major Jain vows, and it also can have both these senses. As one example, the Tattvārtha Sūtra (TAS 7.12) equates *parigraha* with *mūrcchā* (clinging, stupor); the Sarvārthasiddhi commentary glosses *parigraha* in this context as “earning money, maintaining one’s possessions and upgrading livestock, precious things and properties.” (SAS 7.17) Likewise, the Yoga Bhāṣya, commenting on a mention of *aparigraha* in Yoga Sūtra II.30, says: “Seeing the defects in objects in terms of acquiring them, and defending them, and losing them, and being attached to them, and depriving others of them, one does not take them to himself, and that is *aparigraha*.”

Personal relationships are among the things that Śāntideva considers possessions in the sense of *parigraha*. We saw this point illustrated in the previous chapter: “wife and children” (*bhāryaputra*) along with “treasure, wealth and [general] property” (*dhanadhānyavitta*) were among the objects of

"acquisition" (*lābha*). And he resolves that relationships too must not be the objects of mine-ness: "Mother, father, child, wife, female or male slave, employee, day labourer, friend, royal minister, kinsman, relative — these are not my own, mine. And I am not theirs."[75]

Because *parigraha* includes relationships in this way, I think the term "attachment" is the best available English rendering for it (and therefore "nonattachment" for its opposite *aparigraha*), at least in the sense of *parigrahabuddhi*, the mental state.[76] "Attachment" conveys the close feeling that one can have for other people as well as for relationships in the strict sense. I also find it superior to another possible English term, "possessiveness" (which would come closer to conveying the sense of *parigraha* as actually including property). "Possessiveness" has too strong a sense. If one keeps a modest quantity of material possessions, and is deeply fond of one's spouse and children, very close to them, without wanting to control them or be suffocatingly close — one's mental state is not

75. *yad idaṃ mātāpitṛputrabhāryādāsīdāsakarmakarapauruṣeya-mitrâmātyajñātisālohitā* | *nâite mama svakāḥ* | *nâham eteṣām iti*, ŚS 180.

76. The literal, etymological translation of "grasping" does not get across enough of the term's nuances.

"possessiveness," but it is *parigraha* as Śāntideva understands it, and I think it is conveyed by the English "attachment."

One disadvantage of the "attachment" translation of *parigraha* is that Śāntideva also has other terms that he uses less frequently (such as *abhiṣvaṅga* and *saṃhriyate*) which are also best translated "attachment" or "be attached," but do not mean exactly the same thing in that they do not have the same sense of "possession." So I will note in the text when I am using "attach(ment)" to translate anything other than *parigraha*.

The term *parigraha* is not necessarily negative. For example, the title of the BCA's third chapter is *bodhicittaparigraha*, "getting hold of the awakening mind," which is clearly a good thing in Śāntideva's eyes. But in general, Śāntideva treats attachment as something dangerous, an obstacle to the bodhisattva path. Better to have nonattachment (*aparigraha*), and no longer feel that anything belongs to oneself.

In this sense, Śāntideva equates nonattachment with *vairāgya* (ŚS 18), the absence of *rāga* (greed, lust, desire, passion). Other concepts related to nonattachment in Śāntideva's work include renunciation or "giving up" (*tyāga*, *utsarga, utsarjana*). Śāntideva often uses tyāga in the sense of giving up or getting rid of possessions (e.g. ŚS 144). He also uses it to mean giving or

generosity — the most frequent use of the term's Pali equivalent cāga (Rhys Davids and Stede 1999). He often uses the term to refer to the act of giving external objects, or one's body or its parts, to another (e.g. BCA V.10, ŚS 20). He also uses the term utsarga or *utsarjana* (literally "letting loose") as an equivalent to both tyāga and dāna (giving, generosity; e.g. ŚSK 4). Utsarga and tyāga in these senses are perhaps best rendered with the English "giving up," to convey their double sense of gift and renunciation. But like *parigraha*, these can be modified to indicate a mental state, "mental renunciation" (*tyāgacitta*, *tyāgabuddhi*, *utsarjanacitta*, used more or less synonymously). One passage is helpful in illustrating the connections between these concepts:

> That object should not be taken with respect to which mental renunciation (tyāgacitta) does not arise [or] mental renunciation (tyāgabuddhi) would not progress. That possession (parigraha) about which mental renunciation (utsarjanacitta) would not arise should not be possessed (*na* parigrahītavya*)*. That kingdom, those enjoyments, or that jewel about which the sense of attachment (parigrahabuddhi) arises, for one requested by requesters, should not be obtained.[77]

77. *na tad vastûpādātavyaṃ yasmin vastuni nâsya tyāgacittam utpadyate | na tyāgabuddhiḥ krameta | na sa parigrahaḥ parigrahītavyo yasmin parigrahe nôtsarjanacittam utpādayen na sa parivārôpādātavyo yasmin yācanakair yācyamānasya parigrahabuddhir utpadyate | na tad rājyam upādātavyaṃ na te bhogā na tad ratnam upādātavyaṃ yāvan na tat kiñcid vastûpādātavyaṃ | yasmin vastuni bodhisatvasyâparityāgabuddhir*

The case for nonattachment

Śāntideva offers various arguments for nonattachment. The arguments that have power for someone not yet convinced of the bodhisattva ideal rely on the grounds I discussed in the previous chapter: pleasant and unpleasant mental states, metaphysical understanding, and good and bad karma.

For Śāntideva, our attachments to worldly goods, to relationships and property and honour, leave us unhappy in various ways. He makes this case in greatest detail in his sections dealing with forest renunciation. Relationships with others are ultimately unsatisfying whether or not one gets a chance to see one's loved ones, because one always wants more:

> Not seeing [loved ones], one does not reach pleasure, and does not stand in a meditative state. And, even having seen [them], one is not satisfied; just as before, one is harassed by desire. Not seeing according to reality, one is lost because of agitation. One is burned by that grief, and by the anxiety for union with the loved one.[78]

He makes similar points in ŚS XI. One who is addicted to acquired

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utpadyate, ŚS 21.

78. *apaśyan na ratiṃ yāti samādhau na ca tiṣṭhati* | *na ca tṛpyati dṛṣṭvâpi pūrvavad bādhyate tṛṣā* | *na paśyati yathābhūtaṃ saṃvegād avahīyate* | *dahyate tena śokena priyasaṃgamakāṅkṣayā*, BCA VIII.6-7.

property and similar things (*lābhâdau saktaḥ*) cannot purify his mind (*cittam na śodhayet*, ŚS 196). And so, "those in whom there is no sense of fondness or aversion anywhere are always happy in this world."[79] In general: "Living with the hated is done by suffering ones, separation from the loved is also done by suffering ones; but those happy people who have abandoned both take pleasure in the dharma."[80]

Beyond all this, in his chapters on metaphysical insight, Śāntideva claims an ontological support for nonattachment. In the quote above, one who is attached to things is not seeing them "as they really are" (*yathābhūtam*). In BCA IX and ŚS XIV, he argues at much greater length for the Madhyamaka doctrine of emptiness (*śūnyatā*). There is not space to examine these arguments in detail here, but they are important for Śāntideva's position as he sees it.

Most frequently, Śāntideva argues for nonattachment in terms of karma. Such arguments are found all over his texts. In a long passage quoted

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79. *sūsukhitāḥ sada te naraloke yeṣu priyâpriya nâsti kahiṃcit*, ŚS 194.

80. *apriya ye dukhitehi nivāso ye 'pi priyā dukhitehi viyogo | antôbhe 'pi tehi jahitvā te sukhitā naraye rata dharme*, ŚS 195.

at greater length in my fourth chapter, he says that what is in one's house is a maker of *pāpa*, bad karma (ŚS 19). When Śāntideva criticizes the desire for others' favour while arguing for patient endurance, he considers the objection that others' disfavour might interfere with acquiring property (*lābha*); but he dismisses the objection quickly on the grounds that "the acquisition will perish for me even in this world; but the bad karma will remain constantly."[81] Often such arguments turn to the threat of a bad rebirth, as when, in discussing the various actions that create bad karma, he claims that one's wife should be viewed as a guardian of hell (ŚS 78).

It should be noted that Śāntideva never claims that these arguments apply only to monks. Claims about the unsatisfactoriness of worldly goods, about hells, about emptiness are phrased in such a way that they can apply to everyone. While Śāntideva praises monasticism, monks are not his only audience; on multiple occasions (ŚS 120, 267) he refers specifically to householding bodhisattvas. Monasticism is praised because it allows greater freedom from worldly attachments (ŚS 193); it is not that worldly attachments only harm monks.

81. *lābhântarāyakāritvād yady asau me 'nabhīpsitaḥ* | *naṅkṣyatîhâiva me lābhaḥ pāpaṃ tu sthāsyati dhruvam*, BCA VI.55.

Practising nonattachment

For a reader who has been convinced that nonattachment is a worthy goal to pursue, Śāntideva offers ways to come closer to it, notably including monastic solitude and meditations on the foulness of the body. These help fix nonattachment in the mind, affectively as well as cognitively (to the extent that the two can be separated). Indirectly, they also help Śāntideva defend the ideal of nonattachment: though not part of an argument as such, they help make it possible to claim that, whether or not nonattachment is *desirable*, it is at least *possible*. This point will be significant in replying to potential criticisms of ethical revaluation (which, I think, effectively imply criticisms of nonattachment and patient endurance) in my seventh chapter.

Chapter VIII of the BCA, on the perfection of meditative concentration, is probably the most famous portion of Śāntideva's works, for its meditations involving the equalization and exchange of self and other. (I discuss those meditations briefly in my second and seventh chapters.) But the self-other meditations are preceded by other meditative practices, more specifically designed to cultivate nonattachment, which also have parallels in the ŚS.

The first practice is monastic solitude. After having argued for nonattachment in the opening of the chapter, and proclaimed the dangers of

association with "fools" (*bāla*, BCA VIII.9-15), he urges that one live far away from others, avoiding the distractions of their company, longing to "dwell without fear, not protecting my body, subsisting only on a clay bowl, with garments unfit for thieves."[82] The same practice occupies the whole of ŚS XI, under the heading of *āraṇyasaṃvarṇana* (praise of the forest).[83] The practice

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82. *mṛtpātramātravibhavaś caurāsaṃbhogacīvaraḥ* | *nirbhayo vihariṣyāmi kadā kāyam agopayan*, BCA VIII.29.

83. Andrew Skilton (2002, 125-34), comparing different versions of the story of Kṣāntivādin or Supuṣpacandra (as I discussed earlier), shows how the versions of the same story in the Samādhirāja Sūtra and the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya (MSV) seem to reflect a strong conflict between the ideal of the forest monk and that of the monk in the established urban or village monastery — what Christians have called "eremitic" and "cenobitic" forms of monasticism, respectively. Where the MSV strongly discourages forest renunciation, the Samādhirāja sings its praises — in the process of telling what, in its narrative details, is otherwise mostly the same story. Śāntideva, it is worth noting, frequently quotes the Samādhirāja in the ŚS (under the name Candrapradīpa), and refers in the BCA (VIII.106) to Supuṣpacandra, the name of the main character in that sūtra's version of the story. So it might seem that Śāntideva is entirely on the side of that text's eremitic renunciation. The story is a little more complicated, however, since he also recommends "work" or "service" (*vaiyāvṛtya*) and explains this as performing duties in monastic institutions. (ŚS 55) Recall the importance in Śāntideva's texts of service to others; I suspect that while Śāntideva clearly sees great value in forest renunciation, nevertheless at some point (even if in a later life) the forest monk must eventually return to a more settled life in order to be of benefit to others.

anticipates the ethical revaluation I will describe below. It is not merely the *attachment* to possessions and relationships that is harmful, but the things themselves, because they *produce* attachment. Therefore, an effective practice to rid oneself of such attachment is to rid oneself of the objects of attachment, as best one can.

A second practice is the meditation on the foulness of the body. In BCA VIII this practice occurs in direct conjunction with monastic solitude, though it is treated separately from solitude in the ŚS, in two different places (209-12, 228-33). To avoid feeling desire for sexual partners, one visits cemeteries to remind oneself of the body's eventual and inevitable state of decay (BCA VIII.30-1); and one mentally breaks the body down into its component parts and fluids (ŚS 209-10, 228-9). The literary qualities of the texts aid one in this practice; in discussing erotic love, Śāntideva pours forth imagery that evokes disgust: corpses, bones, vultures, dirt, mud, excrement (VIII.43-70).

Patient endurance

Patient endurance in South Asian Buddhism

The concept of patient endurance has a long history in South Asian Buddhist texts. While mainstream (i.e. non-Mahāyāna) and Mahāyāna Buddhist texts offer differing lists of the bodhisattva's virtues or perfections (usually called *pāramī* in Pali, *pāramitā* in Sanskrit)[84], they both agree in including patient endurance on the list.

In mainstream Buddhist literature, patient endurance (Pali *khanti*) is considered the sixth of a bodhisattva's ten perfections. The Dhammasaṅganī, first book of the Pali Abhidhamma, defines it by giving synonyms: "patient endurance is bearing [burdens], endurance, non-ferocity, non-malice, satisfaction of the mind."[85] It is a prominent theme in the Pali Jātaka stories,

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84. In mainstream traditions, one is not supposed to follow the *path* of the bodhisattva, but bodhisattvas nevertheless *exist*. It is just that there was and will be only one bodhisattva (Pali *bodhisatta*) in our world, namely the one who would eventually be born as Siddhattha Gotama, identified as the historical Buddha (and referred to in Mahāyāna traditions as Śākyamuni). Among the most beloved mainstream Buddhist texts are the Jātaka stories, which tell of his former births and always identify him as the *bodhisatta*. Shanta Ratnayaka (1985) discusses the role of the bodhisattva in mainstream Buddhism at greater length.

85. *khantī khamanatā adhivāsanatā acaṇḍikkaṃ anasuropo*

and also in stories of Gotama Buddha's life. The Sri Lankan *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism* offers a helpful listing of both kinds of stories (Ariyadhamma 1984). The stories generally tell of the bodhisattva's or buddha's patient willingness to suffer others' wrongdoing without anger, even when his limbs are cut off.

Such dismemberment is a major feature of the tale of the monk usually known as Kṣāntivādin (or Khantivādi in Pali), which appears in several wildly varying versions, within and outside of a Mahāyāna context. The common thread of this story: a powerful king falls asleep with his courtesans around him. The courtesans go wandering in the forest and discover Kṣāntivādin, receiving teachings from him. The king soon wakes up and fidns them; jealous, he dismembers Kṣāntivādin. Kṣāntivadin goes by the name Supuṣpacandra in the Samādhirāja Sūtra (which Śāntideva refers to as the Candrapradīpa), and Śāntideva refers to him by that name at BCA VIII.106. (Skilton 2002)

In a Mahāyāna context, patient endurance (now called *kṣānti*, or

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attamanatā cittassa, Dhs 1341. The meanings of Pali (and Sanskrit) terms are often close enough to each other that it is difficult to provide different English terms to distinguish them.

sometimes *kṣamā*, in Sanskrit)[86] comes to be considered the third of a bodhisattva's six (sometimes ten) perfections. A number of Mahāyāna works address it, especially those that take the perfections as a major theme. The idea is prominent in the Jātakamālā of Āryaśūra, a Mahāyāna updating of the Jātakas in which ten of the 34 stories deal with themes of patient endurance (Meadows 1986, 122-3n64). Here too, the concept primarily refers to a response to others' wrongdoing, as in the story of the ascetic Bodhi, who does not get angry when a king kidnaps his wife.

Patient endurance is also a major chapter in the Pāramitāsamāsa, also

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86. Crosby and Skilton (1995, 49) suggest that the Sanskrit term *kṣānti* involves some etymological confusion. They suggest that it "probably results from an incorrect 'back-formation' of a Prakrit term, *khanti*, into Sanskrit," identifying *khanti* as deriving from the root *kham* "to be pleased, to be willing to" rather than the Sanskrit root *kṣam* ("to be patient, to endure") with which *kṣānti* is normally identified. They go on to speculate that Śāntideva may frequently resort to the synonym *kṣamā* for this reason. However, in many of the Pali Buddhist texts identified, *khanti* does seem to have the primary meanings of "patience" and "endurance," and Śāntideva does not for the most part seem to use *kṣānti* with the connotation of "willingness" that Crosby and Skilton suggest it sometimes takes on. The one exception is his occasional use of *kṣānti* in its secondary sense of "intellectual receptivity" (see Edgerton 1970a, 27, 199), especially in the stock compound *anutpattikadharmakṣānti*, "receptivity to the idea that mental states are not originated."

identified as a work of Āryaśūra's though their historical writers are likely different (Meadows 1986, 4-21); this text's chapter on patient endurance is unusual in that it focuses on the first two of the three varieties of patient endurance (enduring suffering and dharmic patience), rather than on patience toward wrongdoing, the third and more common variety (Meadows 1986, 87-91).[87] Candrakīrti discusses patient endurance in his autocommentary to the Madhyamakāvatāra (translated to French as la Vallée Poussin 1907). Other major Sanskirt Mahāyāna texts which address it at some length include the Divyāvadāna stories and Asaṅga's Bodhisattvabhūmi (see Dayal 1970, 219-26 for a discussion).

Patient endurance is not confined to the context of Buddhism, or of discussions of bodhisattvas; it also appears as a virtue in some non-Buddhist South Asian texts (often in the form *kṣamā* rather than *kṣānti*). For example, in the Bhagavad Gītā, it is identified as one of the characteristics of a man who has the high quality of *sattva* (BG XVI.3); Krishna even identifies himself with *kṣamā* at BG X.4-5. In the Jain Tattvārtha Sūtra, *kṣamā* appears in a list of qualities that produce beneficial (*sadvedya*) karma (TAS

87. See the next section for a discussion of these three varieties.

VI.13).

Relatively little Western secondary scholarly work has been done on the concept of patient endurance in South Asian traditions. Much of what exists is in encyclopedic treatments (Ariyadhamma 1984; Dayal 1970, 219-26), dictionary entries, and annotations to translations (Crosby and Skilton 1995, 45-9; Meadows 1986). Alex Wayman (1994) tries to treat patient endurance as a resource for political peacemaking, but the attempt is unsatisfying; little if any of his evidence successfully links patient endurance with peacemaking. Andrew Skilton's (2002) article on the Kṣāntivādin story does not focus at length on the idea of patient endurance.

The topic of patient endurance has, however, attracted greater interest in works on Buddhism aimed at a more popular audience, including some written by scholars of Buddhism (e.g. Aronson 2004; Chodron 2001; Dalai Lama XIV 1997; Thurman 2004). Indeed, two of these (XIV 1997; Thurman 2004) are written partially in the form of commentaries on the sixth chapter of the BCA. This interest is understandable, since anger — the most common antithesis to patient endurance in Buddhist texts — is a common and seemingly problematic feature of our daily lives. The commentarial form, however, makes it more difficult to draw out themes and difficulties in the

texts. I intend my work here to draw out the (sometimes startling) consequences of patient endurance at more length than these texts are able to.

The varieties and commonalities of patient endurance

Śāntideva divides patient endurance into three major varieties: the patient endurance that is the enduring of suffering (*duṣkhâdhivāsanakṣānti*); the patient endurance from reflecting on the dharma[88] (*dharmanidhyānakṣānti*); and the patient endurance that is patience toward others' wrongdoing (*parâpakāramarṣaṇakṣānti*, ŚS 179). He makes the distinction in the patient-endurance chapter of the ŚS, but it also appears in Prajñākaramati's commentary on BCA VI.9 (BCAP 172). Moreover, as Crosby and Skilton (1995, 45) point out, it also seems to be a major organizing principle for the BCA's own patient-endurance chapter, such that verses VI.11-21 refer to the first kind of patient endurance, VI.22-32 to the second, and VI.33-75 to the third. I intend to show here that Śāntideva does not merely link these phenomena under the rubric of patient endurance for the

88. i.e. the Buddha's teaching.

sake of convenience or etymology, but that patient endurance has common elements that pervade them all. In all three cases, one remains calm and even happy in the face of various undesired events — pains, frustrations, wrongs — that one might face.

The first of these varieties, which Śāntideva opposes to frustration (*daurmanasya*)[89], is closer to the English word "endurance"; the third, which Śāntideva opposes to anger (*dveṣa*)[90], is closer to the English word "patience," though I think either term could describe the other variety. For this reason it is helpful to use a two-word term like "patient endurance" to encapsulate the

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89. *Daurmanasya*, literally "bad-mindedness," has senses of despair and dejection as well as frustration; it generally refers to the mental state that tends to arrive following undesired events. I render it "frustration" to convey both this connection with desire (i.e. that desire is "frustrated") and the fact that it gives rise to anger, which gives it an active sense not conveyed by passive terms like "despair."

90. Śāntideva also has a number of other terms for anger, such as *krodha*, *kopa* and *pratigha*, but their meaning is more or less interchangeable. I have only found differences between the terms to matter because Śāntideva sometimes puns with them, such as when *kopa* also refers to disorders of the bodily humours (BCA VI.22). His terms do not distinguish between "anger" and "hatred," as the present Dalai Lama does in his commentary on BCA VI; but then, the Dalai Lama effectively admits that the distinction is his own constructive way of using the English terms, since he uses each in different contexts to render the Tibetan *zhe sdang* (XIV 1997, 7-8).

idea of *kṣānti* as a whole.

The second variety, as Śāntideva describes it in BCA VI.22-32, is also opposed to anger and involves being patient with others' bad actions. For this reason, it seems largely like a subtype of the third variety — a specific form of patience toward others' wrongdoing, which involves reflecting on the fact that their actions all have causes. It seems to me that the second is treated as distinct from the third primarily in order to emphasize the particular importance of metaphysical reasons for patient endurance. In terms of the actions and mental dispositions that they entail, they do not appear to be different from each other. So I think it is reasonable to subsume this second variety under the third, treating them together for the purposes of my discussion, except as otherwise specified.

In distinguishing between these varieties of patient endurance, English terms that directly translate the Sanskrit ("the patient endurance that is the enduring of suffering," "the patient endurance from reflecting on the dharma" and "the patient endurance that is patience toward others' wrongdoing") are unwieldy and somewhat redundant — as are their Sanskrit equivalents, to some extent. So I will abbreviate them for brevity, referring to the first variety (*duṣkhâdhivāsanakṣānti*) as "enduring suffering," the second

(*dharmanidhyānakṣānti*) as “dharmic patience,” and the third (*parâpakāramarṣaṇakṣānti*) as “patience toward wrongdoing.” ŚS IX focuses primarily on enduring suffering and BCA VI on patience toward wrongdoing, although all three kinds of patient endurance appear in both chapters, and enduring suffering appears in many different places in the texts.

I see at least two ways in which enduring suffering and patience toward wrongdoing are closely related in Śāntideva’s work. First, there is a logical or analytical relationship. When one is wronged by others, it is likely to be an undesired event, and therefore experienced as suffering; indeed, the fifth chapter will suggest that it *has* to be such for any reaction to it to involve patient endurance. So, effectively, the events that provoke patience toward wrongdoing are a subset of those that provoke enduring suffering. The appropriate reactions are intertwined as well. We see this when Śāntideva discusses being the victim of stealing. While he addresses stealing in the context of anger, and more generally of patience toward wrongdoing, the reasoning he gives to remain patient is that possessions are dangerous to have anyway (BCA VI.100) — a central part of Śāntideva’s justifications for nonattachment, which (as we will soon see) is itself very closely tied to enduring suffering.

Second, there is a causal relationship. Enduring suffering, as Śāntideva discusses it, requires that one fight frustration; patience toward wrongdoing requires that one fight anger. And both of Śāntideva's texts (ŚS 179 and BCA VI.7-8) note that anger feeds on frustration; so enduring suffering makes it easier to have patience toward wrongdoing.

Happiness from enduring suffering

Śāntideva's case for enduring suffering is relatively straightforward: one will feel less suffering and be happier. Early in his discussion of frustration (*daurmanasya*), Śāntideva makes the pragmatic point that it accomplishes little. So it is not only an unpleasant mental state, but an unnecessary one: "If indeed there is a remedy, then what's the point of frustration? And if there is no remedy, then what's the point of frustration?"[91]

In the last chapter we already saw a glimpse of the most extreme way in which enduring suffering can lead to happiness: the Sarvadharmasukhakrānta meditative state (*samādhi*), "making happiness toward all phenomena." The passage describing this meditative state is one of

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91. *yady asty eva pratikāro daurmanasyena tatra kim* | *atha nâsti pratikāro daurmanasyena tatra kim*, BCA VI.10.

the most provocative in the entire ŚS. Śāntideva says that "for a bodhisattva who has obtained this meditative state, with respect to all sense objects, pain is felt as happiness indeed, not as suffering or as indifference."[92] He proceeds to describe a panoply of graphic tortures in a startlingly upbeat manner. For example:

> [The bodhisattva who has attained this meditative state], while being fried in oil, or while pounded like pounded sugarcane, or while crushed like a reed, or while being burned in the way that oil or ghee or yogurt are burned — has a happy thought arisen.[93]

While one might cringe at the literal masochism in this passage, it is also not hard to see the power of its appeal: it strongly suggests that a bodhisattva can be happy anywhere, any time, in any condition. And there is a particular practice that the bodhisattva pursues to reach this state.

92. *yasya samādheḥ pratilambhād bodhisatvaḥ sarvârambaṇavastuṣu sukhām eva vedanāṃ vedayate* | *nâduṣkhâsukhāṃ*, ŚS 181. Prajñākaramati inserts a *na duḥkhām* in between these two sentences (BCAP 177), and as Bendall and Rouse (1971, 177n3) note, the Tibetan text follows it as well. So its absence seems like a scribal error in the Cambridge manuscript.

93. *tailapācikaṃ vā kriyamāṇasya* | *ikṣukuṭṭitavad vā kuṭṭhyamānasya* | *naḍacippitikaṃ vā cipyamānasya tailapradyotikaṃ vâdīpyamānasya sarpiḥpradyotikaṃ vā dadhipradyotikaṃ vâdīpyamānasya sukhasaṃjñâiva pratyupasthitā bhavati*, ŚS 181.

Whenever he is subjected to such unpleasant fate, he makes a mental determination or vow (*praṇidhāna*) that those that everyone, from those who honour him to those who torture him, should reach the great awakening (ŚS 182). In the BCA he suggests starting with small pains to learn to endure bigger ones: "because of the practice of mild distress, even great distress is tolerable."[94] Prajñākaramati draws a direct connection between the two, quoting the ŚS passage in his commentary on the BCA verse.

The case against anger

Śāntideva's arguments for patience toward wrongdoing consist largely of arguments against anger, against which this patience is juxtaposed. He largely lays out these arguments in the sixth chapter of the BCA. These arguments involve all three of the grounds I discussed in the previous chapter, sometimes woven together. In his arguments against anger, Śāntideva points to a connection between good karma and happiness: "One who destroys anger is happy in this world and the next."[95]

94. *mṛduvyathâbhyāsāt soḍhavyāpi mahāvyathā*, BCA VI.14.

95. *yaḥ krodhaṃ hanti nirbandhāt sa sukhîha paratra ca*, BCA VI.6.

I have already mentioned what is perhaps Śāntideva's most succinct verse arguing against anger: "the mind does not get peace, nor enjoy pleasure and happiness, nor find sleep or satisfaction, when the dart of anger rests in the heart."[96] This set of psychological claims has a strong intuitive plausibility, in our context as well as his; it is rarely difficult, I suspect, for anyone to remember times that anger has negatively affected her peace of mind or pleasure or sleep.

Beyond this, Śāntideva seeks to minimize the significance of others' wrongdoing (*apakāra*). (This minimizing poses some difficulties that I will discuss in the fifth chapter.) He is especially concerned to belittle insults and the destruction of praise. He asks: "The gang of contempt, harsh speech and infamy does not bind my body. Why, O mind, do you get enraged by it?"[97]

Śāntideva offers severe warnings of anger's karmic consequences. There is *no* bad karma equal to anger, he says, so patient endurance is the

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96. *manaḥ śamaṃ na gṛhṇāti na prītisukhaṃ aśnute | na nidrām na dhṛtim yāti dveśaśalye hṛdi sthite*, BCA VI.3.

97. *nyakkāraḥ paruṣaṃ vākyam ayaśaś cêty ayaṃ gaṇaḥ | kāyaṃ na bādhate tena cetaḥ kasmāt prakupyasi*, BCA VI.53.

greatest austerity that one can make to reduce bad karma.[98] He warns that anger leads one to great suffering in the hells, more than the suffering that makes one angry in the first place:

> If suffering merely here and now cannot be endured, why is anger, the cause of distress in hell, not restrained? In the same way, for the sake of anger I have been placed in hells thousands of times; I have done this neither for my own sake nor for anyone else's. [99]

There is only one kind of anger that Śāntideva seems to approve of, effectively an exception that proves the rule. He approves of anger when it is directed at anger itself: "Let anger toward anger be my choice."[100] More generally, he suggests elsewhere that anger at "my enemies, craving, anger and so on" (*tṛṣṇādveṣâdiśatravaḥ*, BCA IV.28) might be valuable: "Lodged in my own mind, these well-stood ones still harm me. In this very case I do not get angry. Damn, what unsuitable patience (*sahiṣṇutā*)!"[101]

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98. *na ca dveṣasamaṃ pāpaṃ na ca kṣāntisamaṃ tapaḥ*, BCA VI.2.

99. *yady etan mātram evâdya duḥkhaṃ soḍhuṃ na pāryate | tan nārakavyathāhetuḥ krodhaḥ kasmān na vāryate | kopârtham evamevâhaṃ narakeṣu sahasraśaḥ | kārito 'smi na câtmârthaḥ parârtho vā kṛto mayā*, BCA VI.73-4.

100. *dveṣe dveṣo 'stu me varam*, BCA VI.41.

101. *maccittāvasthitā eva ghnanti mām eva susthitāḥ | tatrâpy ahaṃ*

Śāntideva also makes the claim for dharmic patience (*dharmanidhyānakṣānti*) in BCA VI.22-32; this, as I noted earlier, is patience toward wrongdoing which is informed by metaphysical insight. Śāntideva's point here is that the emotion of anger comes out of an incorrect belief about the world — namely that other agents can appropriately be blamed for their actions. "I have no anger at my bile and so on, though they make great suffering. Why is there anger at sentient beings? They too are angry due to a cause."[102] Anger, whether my own or another's, has its causes. It is not chosen; it is merely another product of the universe's dependent arising (BCA VI.23-26). Moreover, there is no self which is capable of being an agent of anger (BCA VI.27-30). And "therefore, whether one has seen an enemy or a friend doing something wrong, having considered that the act has causes, one should become happy."[103]

These are the main arguments against anger in terms that could

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na kupyāmi dhig asthānasahiṣṇutāṃ, BCA IV.29.

102. *pittādiṣu na me kopo mahāduḥkhakareṣv api* | *sacetaneṣu kiṃ kopaḥ te 'pi pratyayakopitāḥ*, BCA VI.22.

103. *tasmād amitraṃ mitraṃ vā dṛṣṭvâpy anyāyakāriṇam* | *īdṛśāḥ pratyayā asyêty evaṃ matvā sukhī bhavet*, BCA VI.33.

convince someone not already on the path. But there are other arguments directed specifically at bodhisattvas. As we saw in the previous chapter, it is crucial for the bodhisattva to win beings over; and anger interferes with this activity, where desire (*rāga*, connected with attachment) might be able on some occasions to help with it. This is why anger is far worse than desire, though desire and anger are both afflictions (*kleśa*s) that cloud the mind and lead one on to suffering. Śāntideva quotes the Upālipariprcchā Sūtra[104] to this effect:

> If, Upāli, a great bodhisattva setting out on the Mahāyāna should fall into downfalls connected with desire, as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, and if once he should fall into a downfall which is connected with anger, by the standard of the Bodhisattvayāna... the downfall connected with anger is the more severe of the two. For what reason is this? Anger, Upāli, conduces to the abandoning of beings; desire conduces to the attraction (*saṃgraha*) of beings. Then, Upāli, the affliction which conduces to the attraction of beings is no deception and no fear for the bodhisattva.[105]

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104. Extant in Chinese, this sūtra has been translated into English (Chang 1991, 262-79).

105. *saced upāle mahāyānasaṃprasthito bodhisatvo mahāsatvo gaṅgānadīvālikôpamā rāgapratisaṃyuktâpattīr āpadyeta* | *yāṃ câikato dveṣasaṃprayuktām āpattim āpadyeta bodhisatvayānaṃ pramāṇīkṛtya* | *pe* | *iyaṃ tābhyo gurutarâpattir yêyaṃ dveṣasaṃyuktā* | *tat kasya hetoḥ* | *yo 'yaṃ dveṣôpāle satvaparityāgāya saṃvartate* | *rāgaḥ satvasaṃgrahāya*

Likewise: "Then, Upāli, bodhisattvas not excellent in means fear downfalls connected with desire; bodhisattvas excellent in means fear downfalls connected with anger, not downfalls connected with desire."[106] Excellence in means (*upāyakauśalya*), the ability to teach others in the appropriate way to bring them onto the path, is deeply hindered by anger. Unlike desire, it has no saving graces. Anger both creates suffering for oneself and interferes with one's ability to benefit others; this is why nothing is as karmically bad as anger, or as karmically good as patient endurance.

So, to counteract anger, Śāntideva prescribes the practice of friendliness or love (*maitrī*, ŚS 212-19). This practice takes a number of forms, but the most notable is the redirection (*pariṇāmanā*) of good karma toward others' benefit, as discussed in the previous chapter. This act happens at a number of places in Śāntideva's texts, but on ŚS 213-16 it is specifically identified as a practice of friendliness which is intended to counteract anger.

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saṃvartate | *tatrôpāle yaḥ kleśaḥ satvasaṃgrahāya saṃvartate* | *na tatra bodhisatvasya chalaṃ na bhayaṃ*, ŚS 164. The ellipsis translates Śāntideva's *pe*.

106. *tatrôpāle ye 'nupāyakuśalā bodhisatvās te rāgaprati-saṃyuktâbhyâpattibhyo bibhyati* | *ye punar upāyakuśalābodhisatvās te dveṣasaṃprayuktâbhyâpattibhyo bibhyati na rāgapratisaṃyuktābhyêti*, ŚS 164-5.

The way that one redirects good karma, in practice, is through an expressly stated wish: for example, "Whoever is suffering distress of body or mind in any of the ten directions — may they obtain oceans of happiness and joy by means of my good karmas."[107] This rationale for karmic redirection, I think, could apply even to those skeptical that the process will actually work: by regularly wishing that one's own good deeds will benefit others' well-being, one can at least diminish the anger that one feels toward them.

The idea of ethical revaluation

Ethical revaluation, as I use the term, is a dramatic change in the way one views the value toward one's flourishing of particular objects or events, away from the value for flourishing that the objects or events are normally or conventionally held to have. While all ethical reflection involves *some* sort of change in conventional value concepts, I use "ethical revaluation" to refer specifically to one's valuation objects or events in the world, not to abstract

107. *sarvāsu dikṣu yāvantaḥ kāyacittavyathāturāḥ* । *te prāpnuvantu matpuṇyaiḥ sukhaprāmodyasāgarān*, BCA X.2.

concepts, and with reference to their value for the flourishing of oneself or another.

The change in question may involve coming to see something as neutral or negative which would normally be seen as positive, or coming to see something as neutral or positive which would normally be seen as negative. Either way, one revalues objects in a way that reflects the object's real effect on one's flourishing. Such a revaluation needs to be a qualitative and not merely quantitative change; but it is more than even that, in that one changes one's view of what might be called the "direction" or "sign" of the object's effect. That is, one is not merely saying that the object is less (or more) good for us than we had thought, but that what we thought was good for us is actually bad or at least neutral.

The concept of "flourishing," as I use it here, derives ultimately from Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia*, often misleadingly translated as "happiness." "Flourishing" is the state of living well or properly, however a given ethics might define such a state. I call it "ethical" because, as mentioned in the dissertation's opening, I use the term "ethical" to mean reflection on the way in which one should live; one's conception of flourishing is the ideal set out in one's ethics, whatever that may be. I could have used

the term "eudaimonistic revaluation" instead to provide additional precision, but I find that too complex a piece of jargon for such a central concept.

In Śāntideva's case, of course, the best life is the life of a buddha, and the penultimate life that of a bodhisattva. So in Śāntideva's case, ethical revaluation means changing one's view of the value of things so that the view reflects the thing's contribution (positive or negative) to the bodhisattva path. Such a revaluation is quite a radical one, as we will see.

We saw in the previous chapter how good karma (*puṇya*) bears some resemblance to *eudaimonia* in Śāntideva's thought, and so there is a certain sense in which one might say that Śāntideva revalues things according to the extent to which they produce good or bad karma. However, in a sense good karma is *itself* one of the things which is effectively revalued, under certain conditions. For as we saw before, if good karma is not properly redirected, it may simply produce a worldly "benefit" of more property or close relationships in another life, which, as we will see, are actually dangerous.

The process of ethical revaluation is cognitive; one thinks differently about things, understands them differently. However, it has important affective effects. I will now show how particular kinds of ethical revaluation reduce one's attachment and anger, at least when they are properly fixed in

the mind (often through meditative practice). These affective effects are the reason that Śāntideva considers ethical revaluation to be highly urgent.

Ethical revaluation of possessions

We saw earlier the conceptual link between physical possessions and attachment, both referred to as *parigraha*. And possessions (including human relationships, as noted) are a central object of Śāntideva's ethical revaluation. In Śāntideva's South Asia as in our time, it was quite normal for people to want more of these things and think them good and beneficial to their possessor's flourishing. Such common sense is what Śāntideva wants to deny.

Possessions are dangerous because they create attachment; physical *parigraha* leads to *parigrahabuddhi*. This theme is repeated throughout the BCA and ŚS. The acquisition of property (*lābha*) is frequently linked with honour (*satkāra*), and the two are usually criticized together. In a long passage criticizing acquisition and honour, Śāntideva notes that they are[108] to

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108. Śāntideva refers to acquisition and honour in the singular, with the Sanskrit *dvandva* compound *lābhasatkāra*, strongly suggesting their unity. I know of no idiomatic way to represent such a compound in the singular in English, so I use plural forms instead; I do so somewhat reluctantly, since it diminishes the commonality that Śāntideva expresses between them.

be avoided by a great bodhisattva because they generate desire (*rāga*).[109] Similar criticisms of acquisition and honour, treated together, appear in various other places throughout the texts; for example, in the section on others' wrongdoing which we will examine closely in a moment, Śāntideva claims: "The bondage of acquisition and honour is unjustified for me who has the goal of liberation."[110] Even one of the kārikās claims that "One should have fear of acquisition and honour."[111] Similarly, while explaining the benefits of forest renunciation, he describes the effort required to protect the property one has as a "torment" or "burden" (*kheda*, BCA VIII.87). So, "great gain is among the obstacles to the Mahāyāna."[112]

The passages just cited may suggest that one is already a bodhisattva. But Śāntideva also makes criticisms of possession that are not specified as applying to bodhisattvas only. In my next chapter we will see a long quote

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109. *iha maitreya bodhisatvena mahāsatvena rāgasamjanano lābhasatkāraḥ pratyavekṣitavyaḥ*, ŚS 105.

110. *muktyarthinaś câyuktaṃ me lābhasatkārabandhanam*, BCA VI.100.

111. *lābhasatkārabhītiḥ syād*, ŚSK 16.

112. mahāyānântarāyeṣu bahulābhatā, ŚS 145.

(from ŚS 19, left out here for brevity's sake) where Śāntideva heaps praise on what is given away and condemns what is kept in the home, whoever the giver or keeper might be. And Śāntideva applies similar criticisms specifically to relationships, especially sexual ones. In a section describing the various kinds of bad karma to which one might fall prey, Śāntideva has a long passage criticizing sexual pleasures (*kāma*s) in various ways, arguing in particular that the body is disgusting and foul (ŚS 81-2). In each of these passages he criticizes not merely the desire to acquire these enjoyments, but the enjoyments themselves.

The claim that possessions are dangerous is controversial within Buddhist tradition. Collett Cox notes that, according to the Chinese commentator Yüan-yü, "since the Sautrāntikas maintain that form (*rūpa*) is only indeterminate, seeds of form (*rūpa*) cannot act as the cause of virtuous and unvirtuous factors." The term *rūpa* can mean "matter" as well as Cox's "form" — referring to physical phenomena. The point here seems to be that mental virtue is something separate and independent of one's surroundings, so that goings-on in the external world are entirely neutral to it rather than negative or harmful — an idea we will encounter again later in a very different context. Śāntideva's position, on the other hand, would seem to be

closer to the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas, for whom "form can be virtuous, unvirtuous or indeterminate, and can serve as the cause of virtuous, unvirtuous, or indeterminate factors." (Cox 1995, 215n42)

Śāntideva's view also seems to imply a stronger advocacy of monasticism, with its inherent renunciation of property[113], than is found in many Mahāyāna texts. Explaining the significance of the bodhisattva vow, he says that the bodhisattva must renounce the world in every birth (ŚS 14); in a long passage on the merits of forest renunciation, he says that no buddha will attain the highest awakening in the household life. (ŚS 193) Compare the Vimalakīrti Sūtra, whose hero, "though he lived at home... felt no attachment to the threefold world." (Watson 1997, 33) Now Śāntideva quotes the Vimalakīrti on other matters a number of times in the ŚS, and therefore apparently considers it canonical; one might speculate that he views

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113. Theoretically, at least. Gregory Schopen has noted repeatedly that archaeological and epigraphic evidence suggests that many South Asian Buddhist monks did in fact own property (e.g. Schopen 1997, 3-5). But we are dealing here with ideals, and monks on Śāntideva's view (or most others) are not *supposed* to have more property than their robe and bowl, while householders are. Besides, even given the findings of archaeology and epigraphy, we may surely still reasonably claim that monks were far *less* likely to own property than householders were.

Vimalakīrti as a more advanced bodhisattva than his texts are aimed at, and one not yet ready to attain a buddha's highest awakening. Still, the overall tenor and direction of his views are closer to a more monastic text like the Ugraparipṛccha Sūtra (see Nattier 2003) — which he quotes far more frequently.

Ethical revaluation of others' wrongdoing

Śāntideva sees drastic implications following from the importance of patience toward wrongdoing. While the importance of patience toward wrongdoing is widespread in South Asian Buddhist literature, as we have seen, it leads him to an unusually radical form of ethical revaluation.

Specifically, Śāntideva tells his audience not merely to endure others' wrongdoing, but to *long* for it, hope for it. Wrongdoing is not merely a minor obstacle, or even irrelevant; it is *beneficial*, because it can create patient endurance. Moreover, the kind of wrongdoing he revalues is particularly far-reaching. In other texts, such as the Jātakamālā, others' wrongdoing usually consists of insults and physical attacks. Śāntideva goes further by advocating patience even toward those who destroy one's good karma. While Śāntideva easily can (and does) stress that insults and physical attacks are not serious

wrongs, good karma seems something more important and fundamental, on his own account.

The passage where Śāntideva advocates this form of ethical revaluation most directly is BCA VI.98-107, in the chapter concerning patient endurance. The passage therefore bears a close examination. It follows a discussion minimizing the importance of insults and of those who belittle one's honour (BCA VI.90-97). Having said that such defamation's bad effects are negligible, Śāntideva now goes further and proclaims that it is in fact beneficial, because it help one avoid excessive pride and satisfaction, and the bad rebirths that result from these:

> And praise and so on are security for me; they destroy my intensity; there is jealousy toward those possessing good qualities; and they make excessive anger. Therefore, those who go against me to destroy my praise and so on are surely bound for the goal of protecting me against falling into a bad rebirth.[114]

He now extends the claim to those who take one's belongings or acquisition (*lābha*) as well as those who defame one's honour (*satkāra*), putting acquisition and honour together as he does so frequently: "And the

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114. *stutyādayaś ca me kṣobhaṃ saṃvegaṃ nāśayanty amī* | *guṇavatsu ca mātsaryaṃ saṃpatkopaṃ ca kurvate* | *tasmāt stutyādighātāya mama ye pratyupasthitāḥ* | *apāyapātarakṣârthaṃ pravṛttā nanu te mama*, BCA VI.98-9.

bondage of acquisition and honour is unjustified for me who has the goal of freedom. Those who liberate me from bondage: why do I have anger toward them?"[115] In this sense, he adds, such people "have become closed doors for one desiring to enter suffering, as if because of the Buddhas' supernatural power"[116]; they block one's worst tendencies and help one advance.

Now this is all very well when one faces the destruction of acquisition and honour, one might reply. For we already know that those can be dangerous. But what if someone attacks one's good karma? Isn't that a detriment to the very advancement on the path that Śāntideva advocates? Śāntideva also dismisses this objection, and his reasoning here is important:

> "What he did is a destroyer of good karma": on this matter, anger is not justified. There is no asceticism (*tapas*) equal to patient endurance; surely he has occasioned it. Now, through my

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115. *muktyarthinaś câyuktaṃ me lābhasatkārabandhanam | ye mocayanti māṃ bandhād dveṣas teṣu kathaṃ mama*, BCA VI.100. The compound *lābhasatkārabandhana* is ambiguous and could be read either as "the bondage of acquisition and honour" — i.e. "the bondage that is acquisition and honour" — or as "bondage *to* acquisition and honour." My discussion of possessions above has shown that either reading makes sense — these things can themselves *be* a form of bondage, as well as one being bound *to* them. Prajñākaramati takes it in the first sense (BCAP 225), as do I.

116. *duḥkhaṃ praveṣṭukāmasya ye kapāṭatvam āgatāḥ | buddhâdhiṣṭhānata iva*, BCA VI.101.

> own faults I do not practice patience in this case. The obstacle here is only made by me, when the occasion is a cause of good karma.[117]

Śāntideva does not explain what constitutes the destruction of good karma, and Prajñākaramati's commentary (BCAP 226) is not much clearer. Tibetan commentators take it to mean interference with one's bodhisattva practices, which prevents one's good karma from arising. Kelsang Gyatso, for example, expounds the objector's position ("What he did is a destroyer of good karma") in these terms: "When someone harms me he can be interrupting my dharma practice, preventing my accumulation of merit and hindering my practice of giving and the other virtues." (Gyatso 1986, 193) This interpretation seems quite plausible to me, as it fits with the evidence I have provided about good karma in the second chapter. Good karma is virtue and/or flourishing, which result from being on the bodhisattva path. When one's practice of that path is impeded by another person, that person is effectively destroying one's good karma.

The claim about asceticism (in the block quote above) effectively points

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117. *puṇyavighnaḥ kṛto 'nenêty atra kopo na yujyate* | *kṣāntyā samaṃ tapo nâsti nanv etat tad upasthitam* | *athâham ātmadoṣeṇa na karomi kṣamām iha* | *mayâivâtra kṛto vighnaḥ puṇyahetāv upasthite*, BCA VI.102-3.

the audience to the second verse of the chapter, where Śāntideva had proclaimed that "there is no bad karma equal to anger and no asceticism equal to patient endurance."[118] Asceticism (*tapas*) is a key concept in South Asian traditions. Deriving from a root for "heat," it refers in the Ṛgveda to injuries or pain that come from heat, and in the Brāḥmaṇas and afterward comes to refer to self-imposed practices of austerity or self-mortification (see Kaelber 1979). Śāntideva occasionally uses it with the sense of "pain" (as when he refers to *tapasvin*s at BCA VI.51) but more commonly, as here, uses it to refer to practices designed to burn off one's existing bad karma — self-purification (*ātmabhāvaśodhana*). Here, he claims that patient endurance is the best self-purification available — likely because of anger's destructive effects, as noted earlier.

Effectively, then, the claim is that when someone interferes with my practice as a bodhisattva, really he can help it, by giving me an opportunity for the best kind of self-purification. Indeed, he is a *cause* of my good karma, and the next verse spells out this point with a technical definition of what a cause *is*. "For what does not exist without another thing and is perceived

118. *na ca dveṣasamaṃ pāpaṃ na ca kṣāntisamaṃ tapaḥ*, BCA VI.2.

when the other thing exists — that other thing indeed is the cause of it. How can that be called obstacle?"[119] If B does not exist when A does not exist, and B exists when A does exist, then A can be called the cause (*kāraṇa*) of B — the "when" implying a temporal sequence, in that A comes before B, apparently as a necessary and sufficient condition. A, here, is a wrongdoer (*apakārin*), such as the one who destroys good karma (*puṇyavighna*); B, it would seem, is the good karma that comes from patience. A is a cause of B, not an obstacle, a fact that Śāntideva emphasizes with examples in BCA VI.105: we can hardly say that someone who asks for something (a *yācakā*, "requester") is an obstacle to our giving. Quite the opposite.

Moreover, "requesters are easy to find in the world, but wrongdoers are hard to find, because nobody wrongs innocent me."[120] The idea here is that it is never hard to find an occasion for practising the bodhisattva's first perfection, generosity (*dāna*), because there are always people who will ask for something. But the third perfection, patient endurance, is a different

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119. *yo hi yena vinā nâsti yasmiṃś ca sati vidyate* | *sa eva kāraṇaṃ tasya sa kathaṃ vighna ucyate*, BCA VI.104.

120. *sulabhā yācakā loke durlabhās tv apakāriṇaḥ* | *yato me 'naparādhasya na kaścid aparādhyati*, BCA VI.106. "Innocent me" means "me, the innocent one"; it is not a typo for "innocent men."

story. Someone who commits many wrong acts is likely to be wronged in return; but a bodhisattva is relatively innocent (*anaparādha*), and is likely to be wronged less frequently. In such a case, the opportunities to practise patient endurance — at least in the key form of patience toward wrongdoing — are harder to find.

And so Śāntideva brings this line of argument to its climax: therefore "my enemy is to be longed for, because he is an assistant to the bodhisattva path."[121] This is a startling claim in its context — Śāntideva has been talking here not merely about those who destroy acquisition and honour, but also those who destroy good karma. Through a relatively careful logical argument, Śāntideva has tried to persuade us that those who try to hinder us on the bodhisattva path "are to be longed for" (*spṛhanīya*). This conclusion is counterintuitive, to say the least, and we will see in my fifth chapter how it appears to pose some difficulties for him. But it certainly fits with claims he makes elsewhere in his chapter:

> Those doing wrong toward me have been incited only by my karma, by which means they will go to the hells, surely harmed by me. Based on them, my bad karma is greatly diminished because of patience. But based on me, they go to deep and

121. *bodhicaryāsahāyatvāt spṛhaṇīyo ripur mama*, BCA VI.107.

painful hells.[122]

122. *matkarmacoditā eva jātā mayy apakāriṇaḥ | yena yāsyanti narakān mayâivâmī hatā nanu | etān āśritya me pāpaṃ kṣīyate kṣamato bahu | mām āśritya tu yānty ete narakān dīrghavedanān*, BCA VI.47-8.

IV. Giving revalued possessions

The preceding chapters have laid the necessary groundwork: what ethical revaluation is, how Śāntideva argues for it, where it fits in his worldview. It is now time to turn to the key issues that ethical revaluation poses: the apparent contradictions it seems to raise, the way that Śāntideva resolves those contradictions, and the way that they challenge our understanding of Mahāyāna ethics. (Future chapters will show how they challenge contemporary normative ethics as well.)

The first such apparent contradiction involves giving possessions to others.[123] We saw in the previous chapter that Śāntideva revalues possessions as negative and harmful. What we really need to get out of suffering, he thinks, is nonattachment; having possessions creates attachment; therefore, having possessions is dangerous to us. We normally think that they are good for our flourishing, but they are the opposite. But if all this is so, why should we give these things to anyone else? Śāntideva indeed frequently tells us to give generously — and to give for the recipient's benefit.

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123. The second will be treated in the following chapter.

I submit that the apparent contradiction arises because of a frequently unexamined assumption in the study of Mahāyāna ethics: that the benefit of giving is primarily material, that the recipient of a gift benefits from possessing the goods or being able to use them. There are some Mahāyāna texts, such as the Upāsakaśīla Sūtra, which support this assumption. Śāntideva's texts are not among them, and we misread him if we apply that assumption to his thought — as some of his readers have done. For Śāntideva, one does indeed give to benefit the recipient, but the nature of the benefit is quite different.

Why give revalued goods?

There is nothing inherently paradoxical about the ethical revaluation of possessions, as we saw it in the previous chapter. What poses a paradox, at least to a reader far removed from Śāntideva's worldview, is that, having revalued possessions as he does, Śāntideva proceeds to advocate giving them to benefit others.[124]

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124. Śāntideva uses the term *dāna* to refer both to the act of giving, and to the virtue or perfection of generosity (*dānapāramitā*). He does not

The problem may be viewed most acutely in Śāntideva's longest-winded critique of possessions, a passage occurring at ŚS 19. Here, in a section stressing the benefits of nonattachment, Śāntideva juxtaposes many evils of possessing property with many benefits of giving it away:

> What is given must no longer be guarded; what is at home must be guarded. What is given is [the cause] for the reduction of craving; what is at home is the increase of craving. What is given is nonattachment (*aparigraha*); what is at home is with attachment (*saparigraha*). What is given is safe; what is at home is dangerous. What is given is [the cause] for supporting the path of awakening; what is at home is [the cause] for supporting Māra. What is given is imperishable; what is at home is perishable. From what is given [comes] happiness; having obtained what is at home, [there is] suffering. What is given is [the cause] for the abandoning of the afflictions (*kleśa*s); what is at home is the increase of the afflictions. What is given is [the cause] for great enjoyment. What is at home is not [the cause] for great enjoyment. What is given is the action of a good person. What is at home is the action of a bad person. What is given is [the cause] for grasping the mind of a good person. What is at home is [the cause] for grasping the mind of a bad person. What is given is praised by all the Buddhas. What is at home is praised by foolish people.[125]

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usually distinguish between the two.

125. *yad dattaṃ tan na bhūyo rakṣitavyaṃ* | *yad gṛhe tad rakṣitavyaṃ* | *yad dattaṃ tat tṛṣṇākṣayāya* | *yad gṛhe tad tṛṣṇavarddhanaṃ* | *yad dattaṃ tad aparigrahaṃ* | *yad gṛhe tat saparigrahaṃ* | *yad dattaṃ tad abhayaṃ* | *yad gṛhe tat sabhayam* | *yad dattaṃ tad*

Reading this passage, it is hard to avoid forming the question: won't the gift cause all of these same problems when it is in the recipient's home? One suspects on reading a passage like this that the problems of having the gift in one's house have not been solved, but merely displaced onto another person. If Śāntideva's criticisms of property are sound, then giving property away seems like a distinctly egoistic action, not an altruistic one. One truly wishing to benefit others, a reader might think, would actually want to take their property *away* from them, so that it could not produce dangerous attachments in them. Giving hardly seems like the action of a compassionate bodhisattva. And yet Śāntideva advocates it at great length, throughout ŚS I and elsewhere in his work. He does not seem to feel the force of this paradox. What could he be thinking?

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bodhimārgôpastambhāya | yad gṛhe tan mārôpastambhāya | yad dattaṃ tad akṣayam | yad gṛhe tat kṣayi | yad dattaṃ tataḥ sukham yad gṛhe tadārabhya duṣkhaṃ | yad dattaṃ tat kleśôtsargāya | yad gṛhe tat kleśavarddhanam | yad dattaṃ tan mahābhogatāyai | yad gṛhe na tan mahābhogatāyai | yad dattaṃ tat satpuruṣakarma | yad gṛhe tat kāpuruṣakarma | yad dattaṃ tat satpuruṣacittagrahaṇāya | yad gṛhe tat kāpuruṣacittagrahaṇāya | yad dattaṃ tat sarvabuddhapraśastaṃ | yad gṛhe tad bālajanapraśastam, ŚS 19.

Alternate reasons for giving

To clarify what is going on in Śāntideva's work, it is first important to distinguish the various reasons Śāntideva offers for giving things. There are at least three different reasons he offers why giving things away is a good thing: first, renunciation; second, the expression of esteem (*śraddhā*); and third, compassionate benefit to others. It is the third of these reasons that poses the main problem I address in this chapter, and I will discuss it at length in upcoming sections. The first reason, on the other hand, is entirely harmonious with his revaluation of possessions. The second suggests a somewhat different contradiction, which I will shortly discuss in this section.

The first reason Śāntideva offers is that giving is itself a form of renunciation, an aid to nonattachment. We have already seen how the words *utsarga* and *tyāga* can have the sense of giving to someone else as well as the sense of abandoning. By giving something to another person, one both demonstrates one's own lack of attachment to it and minimizes the risk that it will cause future attachment. As a result, one generates a great deal of good karma. Here giving is primarily "giving up"; "giving to" is a secondary function.[126] This is the most straightforward way to interpret the long passage

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126. I owe the giving-up / giving-to distinction to Lawrence Babb

from ŚS 19, juxtaposing harmful things at home with beneficial things given away. This is also the motivation for giving typically offered in the *jātaka* stories — as in the *jātaka* story of King Sivi, who gives his eyes away, and explains that he did it because omniscience (*sabbaññutaṃ*) was dearer to him than his eyes (J IV.408). The key point about this motivation for giving, however, is that it can be entirely self-interested, except to the extent that becoming a buddha is ultimately an altruistic goal (since buddhas provide the greatest possible benefit for other beings). One fosters one's own renunciation by giving things away, regardless of the effect those things might have on their recipients. By itself, this reason for giving is quite straightforward. Possessions are bad for one to have, so one gets rid of them.

The second reason for giving is to express one's esteem or trust (*śraddhā*)[127] in beings who have achieved a higher level on the bodhisattva

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(1988, 83).

127. The term *śraddhā* has a number of different and related senses, usually blending together: esteem, trust, confidence, devotion, faith. I think that Maria Hibbets's (2000) rendering "esteem" comes closest to the sense in which Śāntideva uses the term, so I follow it here. In general, my discussion of upward gifts, and of the distinction between upward and downward gifts, draws heavily on Hibbets's (later Heim's) work (especially Heim 2004). Her work, however, misses the crucial point that I will make later in this chapter: that downward giving, and not only upward giving, can be a matter of esteem.

path. This esteem, it will turn out, is also significant in the third reason for giving, so I will discuss it at some length. Esteem, Śāntideva says, is the *prasāda* (peaceful pleasure, which we will return to later) of an unsoiled mind, rooted in respect (*gaurava*, literally "weightiness," like the Latin *gravitas*), without arrogance.[128] Those without esteem oppose or ridicule buddhas (ŚS 174). One with esteem will listen whenever the Buddha's word is spoken (ŚS 15); esteem is that by which one approaches the noble ones and does not do what is not to be done.[129]

When a householder makes a gift to a monk, especially a gift of food, it is called a *śraddhādeya*, a gift by esteem (ŚS 137-8). Similarly, when the aspiring bodhisattva makes offerings to advanced bodhisattvas and buddhas as part of the seven-part Anuttarapūjā ritual worship in BCA II.10-19, the act expresses esteem. Śāntideva does not use the word *śraddhā* in this passage, but the feelings it evokes match his descriptions of esteem elsewhere: a pleasurable trust in more advanced beings, recognizing their status as more

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I intend to address this point more fully in a future article.

128. *śraddhânāvilacittaprasādo mānavivarjitagauravamūlā*, ŚS 3.

129. *tatra katamā śraddhā | yayā śraddhayâryān upasaṃkrāmati | akaraṇīyaṃ ca na karoti*, ŚS 316.

advanced, that leads to better actions. Right before describing the fabulous offerings he gives, Śāntideva's narrator describes the esteem he places in the buddhas and bodhisattvas and the good action that will result from doing so:

> by becoming your possession, I am in a state of fearlessness; I make the well-being of all beings. I overcome previous bad karma and will make no further bad karma.[130]

The pleasure attached to the process comes out in the passage's literary form. In describing his esteem and his giving, Śāntideva uses the *indravajrā* and *upajāti* metres, ornate 11-syllable metres characteristic of eloquent *kāvya* poetry; as soon as he has finished describing these, in BCA II.20, he reverts to the workaday *śloka* metre, used in most of the BCA and even in dry, technical manuals (*śāstra*s). He describes the gifts in a lush imagery suggesting the romantic mood (*śṛṅgāra rasa*) described by the dramatic theorist Bharata (see Masson and Patwardhan 1970, 48-50); some of the effect of this imagery can be seen even in English translation:

> In these fragrant bath-houses, whose beautiful pillars gleam with jewels, whose canopies are gleaming with pearls, whose floors are clear, radiant crystal — with many pots made of great jewels, filled with flowers and sweet-smelling water, I make a

130. *parigraheṇâsmi bhavatkṛtena nirbhīrbhave sattvahitaṃ karomi* | *pūrvaṃ ca pāpaṃ samatikramāmi nânyacca pāpaṃ prakaromi bhūyaḥ*, BCA II.9.

bath for these Tathāgatas and their children, with songs and music.[131]

The esteem expressed in these acts of giving has important benefits. It is a pleasure taken in good actions; it is "a maker of gladness about renunciation, a maker of excitement about the Jinas' dharma."[132] This combination of trust and pleasure leads one on to good action; as Śāntideva says, those who always have esteem toward a respectable Buddha will abandon neither good conduct nor training.[133] So the practice of esteem helps increase one's good karma.[134] To encourage the growth of esteem, when an aspiring bodhisattva *receives* a gift, he encourages the giver and makes him

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131. *ratnojjvalastambhamanoramesu muktāmayodbhāsivitānakeṣu* | *svacchojjvalasphāṭikakuṭṭimeṣu sugandhiṣu snānagṛheṣu teṣu* | *manojñagandhôdakapuṣpapūrṇaiḥ kumbhair mahāratnamayair anekaiḥ* | *snānaṃ karomy eṣa tathāgatānāṃ tadātmajānāṃ ca sagītavādyaṃ*, BCA II.10-11.

132. *śraddha pramodakarī parityāge śraddha praharṣakarī jinadharme*, ŚS 3.

133. *ye sada śraddha sagauravabuddhe te tu na śīla na śikṣa tyajanti*, ŚS 3.

134. *evaṃ tāvac chraddhâdīnāṃ sadâbhyāsaḥ puṇyavṛddhaye*, ŚS 317.

feel excited about giving it.[135]

In a sense, though, these "upward" gifts, gifts to more advanced beings, are still essentially self-interested. One makes them to foster one's own development, to increase one's own good karma. They are, in Śāntideva's thought, *only* for the benefit of the giver, and eventually of those others whom the giver's development will benefit. The recipient does not benefit at all.

Indeed, one might suspect, the recipient might be *harmed*, by receiving possessions that interfere with mental renunciation. This presents a certain difficulty, for Śāntideva is adamant that one must not hinder the progress of a bodhisattva or buddha: "There will be no limit to the bad rebirths of anyone else who will create interference with [a bodhisattva's] good karma, because he is a destroyer of beings' fortune."[136] Will an upward gift not "create interference" in this way, by putting dangerous, attachment-creating possessions in the bodhisattva's hands?

The problem is less pressing in the case of a ritual gift like that in the

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135. *dānapatiṃ samuttejayati saṃpraharṣayati*, ŚS 150.

136. *yo 'py anyaḥ kṣaṇam apy asya puṇyavighnaṃ kariṣyati | tasya durgatiparyanto nâsti sattvârthaghātinaḥ*, BCA IV.9. I will discuss this point further in the next chapter.

Anuttarapūjā worship, for the recipient's presence is only imagined. The fabulous gifts offered to the buddhas by the narrator of BCA II are so extravagant that even a king might have a hard time affording them, let alone an everyday householder — to say nothing of a monk. The offering takes place within one's mind. Reiko Ohnuma (2005, 108-9) notes that the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya emphasizes that the Buddha is absent when gifts are given to him; what matters is the giver's intention.

But what happens when the recipient is present? *Śraddhādeya* gifts of food from householders to monks — the economic foundation of much Buddhist monasticism — involve a recipient, presumably a bodhisattva, who does physically take possession of the goods offered. Is this recipient not in danger of being hindered?

Śāntideva sees this danger. He tells a story from the Ratnarāśi Sūtra where two hundred of the Buddha's disciples, weeping aloud, proclaimed "Blessed One, we will die rather than eat even a mouthful of *śraddhādeya* food before we have attained the Fruit," i.e. ultimate liberation.[137] They do not want to be hindered by receiving anything. And the Buddha treats their

137. *kālaṃ vayaṃ bhagavan kariṣyāmo na punar aprāptaphalâika-piṇḍapātam api śraddhādeyasya paribhokṣyāmaḥ*, ŚS 137.

concerns as reasonable, responding to them with "excellent, excellent" (*sādhu sādhu*, ŚS 138).

Addressing this concern, I think, is a main purpose of Śāntideva's short section on the purification of enjoyments (*bhogaviśuddhi*, ŚS 267-70). A bodhisattva must react to his received gifts in the proper way, as described in a quote from the Ratnamegha Sūtra:

> "Thus indeed the bodhisattva is one from whom impure acquisition has been removed, to the extent that, having acquired, he does not treat the acquisition as "mine," as wealth; he does not make it a collection. And from time to time, he gives to renouncers and brahmins, and to his mother, father, friends, associates, close relatives and other relatives. He enjoys [what he gets] by himself from time to time, and enjoying, he enjoys it dispassionately. And, thoroughly unattached, when the gain is not being gotten, he does not produce a distressed thought. He is not tormented and does not produce a displeased mind in the presence of generous givers," and so on. So, even this purification of enjoyments, like the purification of one's person, should be for the welfare of others.[138]

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138. *evaṃ hi bodhisatvo 'pariśuddhalābhâpagato bhavati* | *yāval labdhā lābhaṃ na mamāyate* | *na dhanāyate* | *na saṃnidhiṃ karoti* | *kālânukālaṃ ca śramaṇabrāhmaṇebhyo dadāti mātāpitṛmitrâmātyajñātisālohitebhyaḥ kālânukālam ātmanā paribhuṅkte paribhuñjānaś câraktaḥ paribhuṅkte* | *svanadhyavasito na câlabhyamāne lābhe khedacittam utpādayati* | *na paritapyati na ca dāyakadānapatīnām antike 'prasādacittam utpādayatîty ādi* || *tatrâiṣâpy asya bodhisatvasya bhogaśuddhir ātmabhāvaśuddhivat parahitāya bhavet*, ŚS 269.

By taking these various actions and attitudes, the bodhisattva can prevent the danger that receiving the gift would otherwise pose for him. He does so partially by giving it away again — a "moral hot potato," in Lawrence Babb's (1988, 79) terms — but also just by making sure not to think of it as his own. Elsewhere, too, Śāntideva notes that a bodhisattva should accept whatever he receives, but avoid any desires or thoughts of possession: "having taken it all, he does not make it his own; he does not produce a greedy thought."[139] A proper bodhisattva, then, "purifies" any gifts he receives with thoughts and actions of non-possession, as a way to stave off the dangers of attachment. So when the disciples are frightened of taking *śraddhādeya*, the Buddha informs them that one can take it "in morsels as large as Mount Sumeru" as long as one is either properly engaged in the bodhisattva path (*yukta*) or already liberated (*mukta*, ŚS 138)

For these reasons, Śāntideva suggests that one should *not* give to a monk whose conduct is improper and karmically bad (*pravrajito duḥśīlapāpasamācāro bhikṣur*, ŚS 67-8). As Susanne Mrozik (1998, 68-9) has noted, such a monk can still be considered a beneficial friend (*kalyāṇamitra*),

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139. *sarvaṃ pratigṛhya na svīkaroti* । *na lobhacittam utpādayati*, ŚS 149-50.

simply by virtue of his outward monastic comportment. But nevertheless, Śāntideva still describes him as *apātribhūta*, not being a *pātra* (ŚS 68). *Pātra*, literally "vessel," is a term frequently used in Sanskrit texts to describe a worthy or fit recipient of an upward gift (Heim 2004, 57).[140] One should not give to a bad monk, it would seem, at least partially because then the risk of hindering his conduct is real. It is only safe to give to monks who conduct themselves properly, because their progress will not be hindered by a gift.

Non-material benefit

The chief apparent contradiction that concerns me here has to do with the third type of gift, the one which is explicitly intended for others' benefit. Śāntideva endorses the view that one gives for beings' enjoyment (*paribhogāya satvānām*, ŚSK 5), adding that one also preserves the gift for the sake of their enjoyment (*satvôpabhogārtham*, ŚSK 6). But, as we have seen, he has revalued the items which one gives — they are dangerous,

140. Śāntideva often uses *pātra* to refer to a monk's begging bowl (e.g. BCA VIII.129, ŚS 131); here, I think, it is extended metonymically to the monk as a proper recipient.

producing harmful attachment. He seems committed to asserting that one gives other beings things that can harm them — and yet one does it for their benefit. How can this be?

We saw above that if one gives to a worthy vessel (*pātra*), then that vessel can be expected to "purify" the gift and thereby not be harmed by it. But what happens when one gives out of compassion, to ordinary people (*pṛthagjana*s) who are *not* worthy vessels? Śāntideva specifies, after all, that one gives to *all* beings (*sarvasatvebhyas*, ŚSK 4), for their enjoyment (ŚSK 5). But many of these beings, probably most, are not going to give their gift away as a "moral hot potato," or make thoughts of non-possession about it. In that case, is the bodhisattva not harming them, by giving them dangerous possessions from which they do not remove the danger?

This problem is not limited to Śāntideva's own work. We can also see it in the story of the merchant Aviṣahya, as found in Āryaśūra's Jātakamālā. Aviṣahya, a bodhisattva, is praised for generosity arising from great compassion (*kṛpayā mahatyā*, JM V.2); his being a great giver (*dāyakaśreṣṭha*) is linked directly to his goal of the world's welfare (*lokahitārtha*, JM V.intro). Yet immediately afterwards, the text describes possessions (*artha*s) as a

"terrible, massive misfortune creating quick, inexplicable aversion"[141], and referred to as "caravans on the road to a bad rebirth" (*durgatimārgasārtha*, JM V.4). Why would a compassionate one, concerned for people's welfare, give them terrible misfortunes that can take them to a bad rebirth?

The answer, I submit, is that for Śāntideva the recipient benefits from the *act of giving*, not from having the given object in possession; the benefits are significant, but they are not material. Rather, the gift encounter produces mental states in the recipient that encourage the recipient to become a better, more bodhisattva-like, person — including the esteem discussed in previous sections.

Śāntideva's view is illustrated most clearly, I think, when he examines a kind of giving that might seem problematic even without ethical revaluation: namely, giving alcohol to alcoholics. He quotes a passage from

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141. *ugraghanān anarthān akāraṇakṣipravirāgino 'rthān*, JM V.3. Describing *artha* as *anartha* is of course a pun, made possible by the many senses of the word, and useful in promoting mental renunciation. Śāntideva makes the same pun: "Because of acquiring, protecting, destruction, and disappointment, know fortune as unending misfortune." (*arjanarakṣaṇanāśaviṣādair artham anartham anantam avaihi*, BCA VIII.79) Using "fortune" and "misfortune" to translate the terms helps convey the pun's sense in English.

the Ugraparipṛcchā Sūtra where the bodhisattva is to think: "I will give alcoholic drink even to alcoholics; I will cause them to obtain mindfulness and introspection."[142] He goes on to explain in his own words:

> The meaning is: When a bodhisattva has caused the frustration of hope, the [resulting] anger is more serious even than alcoholic drink. Therefore there is a loss of the attraction (*saṃgraha*) of beings; alcohol may be given in the absence of other means of pleasing (*prasādana*) them.[143]

The key terms in this passage are "attraction" (*saṃgraha*) and *prasādana*.[144] It is to preserve and create the alcoholic's attraction and *prasāda* that the bodhisattva must give alcohol when asked to do so — create these states in those who did not yet have them, preserve them in those who did. The attraction and *prasāda*, in turn, will create the mindfulness (*smṛti*) and introspection (*samprajanya*) that are central to the path as Śāntideva envisions it.

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142. *madyapebhyâiva madyapānaṃ dāsyāmi* | *tāṃs tān smṛtisaṃprajanye samādāpayiṣyāmîti*, ŚS 271.

143. *madyapānād api nairāśyakṛte bodhisatve pratigho garīyān* | *satvasaṃgrahahāniś câto 'nyaprasādanôpāyâsaṃbhave madyaṃ deyam*, ŚS 271.

144. The term *prasāda* is a difficult enough term that I leave it untranslated in the general case. I will explain it shortly.

How will they do this? Let us consider the meanings of these terms. *Saṃgraha*, literally "grasping together," is the attraction that beings feel to a bodhisattva. Edgerton (1970b, 548) notes that several Buddhist Sanskrit texts (including the Dharmasaṅgraha, the Bodhisattvabhūmi, the Mahāvastu, the Mahāvyutpatti and the Lalitavistara) refer to four "attraction objects" (*saṃgrahavastu*s) by which bodhisattvas produce attraction — giving (*dāna*) being first among these. Śāntideva also refers to these four attraction objects multiple times (ŚS 50, 95), although he does not list them. In a passage comparing the Buddhas to fishermen, he claims that "having grabbed those beings by means of the Buddhas' knowledge and of the line of the attraction objects, having drawn them from the watery pond of saṃsāra, the blessed Buddhas establish them on the ground of nirvāṇa."[145] (ŚS 95) Here, the attraction objects — no doubt including giving — are specified as something which lure others onto the bodhisattva path.

Another passage praises bodhisattvas' giving, and specifically says that they do so in order to train or lead (*vinayati* or *vineti*) other beings (ŚS 328-9).

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145. *buddhā bhagavantas tān satvān bauddhena jñānena saṃgrahavastusūtreṇa gṛhītvā saṃsārôdakasarasa uddhṛtya nirvāṇasthale sthāpayantîti*, ŚS 95.

This process of leading is described as "the miracle that is attraction of and knowledge of the world" (*jagasaṃgrahajñānavikurvā*, ŚS 327). In this context Śāntideva claims that bodhisattvas "intentionally become prostitutes in order to draw men to them."[146] Giving, then — including the giving of alcohol — is a means to draw people closer to the bodhisattva.

The process by which this happens is established further by the complex term *prasāda*. It derives from the verb *prasīdati*, literally "to settle down." In ŚS XIV, the ontological chapter of the ŚS, Śāntideva uses the term a number of times to refer to a process by which the physical elements become tranquil; but every other time he uses it, as far as I can tell, it has a psychological meaning, referring to a particular, pleasurable and peaceful, mental state.[147] He frequently alliterates it with *prīti* and *prāmodya* (each

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146. *saṃcintya gaṇikāṃ bhonti puṃsām ākārṣanāya te*, ŚS 326. See Mrozik (1998, 144-51) for a discussion of the gender implications of this metaphor and similar passages.

147. In many South Asian contexts, this peaceful joy becomes a "grace" or "kindness" displayed by a divine being, which often manifests itself in the food left over from an offering, establishing a hierarchical relationship between worshipper and deity (see for example Babb 1975, 53-61). The term's ubiquity in South Asian traditions is such that it has gone beyond its South Asian context in startling ways. At www.prasada.com, one may find a website promoting a "new and refreshing master-planned community in Surprise, Arizona" which takes the name Prasada, "derived from the Sanskrit word

meaning "joy"), treating it as a near synonym to them (e.g. ŚS 27, 183). This state of *prasāda* is not necessarily *good*; it can be harmful if it is directed at the wrong object. For example, he claims: "For... the man who has no *prasāda* toward women, the path to heaven is always purified."[148]

However, in the passage above, and elsewhere, creating *prasāda* is treated as a good and important thing. This is, I believe, because the *prasāda* that is created here is in fact the esteem (*śraddhā*) discussed above. As I noted under "Three reasons for giving," Śāntideva tells us that esteem is a kind of *prasāda*, the kind that is rooted in respect. (ŚS 3) Other Buddhist texts also make a close connection, and sometimes equivalence, between *prasāda* (or its Pali equivalent *pasāda*) and esteem. In the Milindapañhā, *sampasādana* is listed as one of the two main characteristics of esteem, the other being aspiration (*sampakkhandana*).[149] Edith Ludowyk-Gyömröi (1947, 35) notes several occasions in the Abhidhamma (specifically the Dhammasaṅganī and Vibhaṅga) where the Pali *saddhā* (esteem, the

meaning 'grace' or 'peace'..."

148. *yasya... strīṣu prasādaḥ puruṣasya no bhavet* | *viśodhitaḥ svargapatho 'sya nityam*, ŚS 83.

149. MP 34 (see Nanayakkara 1984, 224).

equivalent of *śraddhā*) is used synonymously with *abhipasāda*. And in Blo ldan shes rab's Tibetan translation of BCA I.3, he renders Śāntideva's *prasāda* as *dad pa*, the standard Tibetan term for esteem.

Other references suggest further that when a bodhisattva creates *prasāda* in others, it means that he wins them over or even "converts" them (*āvarjayati*) and they trust him, and this allows him to be more effective in helping them out:

> he also becomes suitable for the purposes of beings, because [he is] a maker of *prasāda*. How? Because of his supremely sweet speaking, always softly, a steady one can win over suitable people, and also becomes acceptable [to them]. This indeed is a duty of the bodhisattva, namely, the winning over of beings.[150]

Additionally, in a passage where a monk is praised for risking hell by giving pity sex, the reason given for his action is that it produces a *kuśalamūla* in the beneficiary — literally a "root of excellence," a state of mind that allows one to become better or produce more good karma (ŚS 167).

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150. *adyatve 'pi ca satvârthakṣamo bhavaty eva prasādakaratvāt* | *kathaṃ* || *sarvatrâcapalamandamitasnigdhâbhibhāṣaṇāt* | *āvarjayej janaṃ bhavyam ādeyaś câpi jāyate* || *etad eva ca bodhisatvasya kṛtyam yad uta satvâvarjanaṃ*, ŚS 124. The phrases in the middle make up ŚSK 10. "Attraction, winning to oneself, conversion" is a common Buddhist Sanskrit usage of *āvarjayati* (see Edgerton 1970a, 107).

In another passage Śāntideva describes how, when fishermen throw out bait, the fish is effectively caught as soon as the bait is swallowed, before the fish is reeled in; "just like this are those beings who, having made their minds *prasāda* toward the blessed buddhas, plant a root of excellence with even a single mental *prasāda*."[151]

Śāntideva suggests further that esteem is that form of *prasāda* which is directed toward buddhas and bodhisattvas. He says "Those who are non-backsliding and *prasanna* toward the *saṅgha*, are not backsliding because of the power of esteem."[152] And for Śāntideva, the real *saṅgha* is effectively equivalent to the bodhisattvas, not necessarily the monastic community. In BCA II.26, listing the three things in which one takes refuge, he replaces the *saṃgha* in the standard list of buddha-dhamma-*saṅgha* with "group of bodhisattvas" (*bodhisattvagaṇa*). And once he has begun what he describes as the *saṅghānusmṛti*, the recollection of the good qualities of the *saṅgha* (ŚS

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151. *evam eva ye satvā buddheṣu bhagavatsu cittaṃ prasādya kuśalamūlam avaropayanti antaśâikacittaprasādam api*, ŚS 95. "Having made their minds *prasāda*" is my attempt to render the gerund *prasādya*; a clearer but still more awkward rendering would be "having *prasād*ed their minds."

152. *ye 'vivarttika saṃghaprasannās te 'vivarttika śraddhabalātaḥ*, ŚS 3.

324), he refers throughout only to bodhisattvas, rather than to the *saṅgha* per se (ŚS 324-47).

We have already seen the benefits of esteem: it gives its possessors pleasure in following the bodhisattva path, and makes them more likely to follow the path. This, I submit, is how *prasāda* leads to mindfulness and introspection — the *prasāda* in question is esteem, which leads its possessors to gain the qualities of a bodhisattva, mindfulness and introspection among them.

Esteem, then, is the purpose of the bodhisattva's compassionate gift, just as it is the purpose of the respectful "upward" gift — but with one crucial difference. When the bodhisattva gives upward to more advanced beings, it is to express his own esteem as a *giver*, in a way that benefits him; the recipient does not benefit. When he gives for the benefit of other beings, he benefits them by producing esteem in them, the *recipients*. In both cases, it is the esteem involved in the gift encounter, rather than any material benefit from the gift object, which is the real benefit of giving; the difference is in whether it is the giver or the recipient who has the esteem.

An implication of this point is that this compassionate gift must be "downward," to beings less advanced on the path, because they are the ones

who will benefit from listening to the bodhisattva. There is no use in a bodhisattva giving to an equally advanced bodhisattva. For this reason, I think, Śāntideva urges his audience to cease giving once the recipient has advanced far enough: "like a prostitute, a bodhisattva who has finished his task indifferently abandons a being."[153]

Other passages confirm the claim that giving is a way to win recipients over, without making specific reference to attraction, *prasāda* or esteem. Right before declaring that giving is itself the awakening or enlightenment of the bodhisattva (*dānaṃ hi bodhisatvasya bodhir*, ŚS 35), Śāntideva again compares the bodhisattva's potential gift offerings to bait on a fish hook, in helping others to cross to awakening (ŚS 34). While praising the awakening mind, Śāntideva notes how some past bodhisattvas were able to produce the awakening mind in others by giving particular things to them (ŚS 9).

Moreover, Śāntideva mentions the potentially dangerous consequences of at least some gifts, but sees their benefit as outweighing these. After his discussion of giving alcohol, he turns to gifts of weapons, and claims "Even concerning a sword and so on, after consideration of bad and good

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153. *gaṇikāvat kṛtârtho bodhisatvo nirapekṣas taṃ satvaṃ tyajatîti*, ŚS 168.

consequences, one should make the gift, and then the thought 'there is no transgression' is arrived."[154] Given the value Śāntideva places on *prasāda*, it seems fair to extrapolate that he advocates giving in the general case because of a similar consideration of consequences: possessing the gift may well be bad for the recipient, but the benefits of the gift encounter outweigh that danger.

Śāntideva does not specify a procedure of cost-benefit analysis, of how one decides that the gift's benefit outweighs its dangers. In general I think he does not perform such analyses because he leaves them up to the discretion of the skillful bodhisattva, to "excellence in means" (*upāyakauśalya*). The act of giving, however, seems to be so beneficial that it can outweigh the negative consequences of possessing in almost all cases — only in these most dangerous cases, of giving alcohol and weapons, does Śāntideva express any hesitation that giving might not be the best course of action. I will discuss these points in more detail in the next chapter.

So we have our answer. When the bodhisattva gives for the recipient's

154. *śastrâdiṣv api yady anubadhagurulâdyavavicārād dānam āpadyeta* | *nâivâpattir ity atâiva gamyate*, ŚS 271. The *dya* is likely an error for *gha*.

sake, it is in order to attract that recipient and win his esteem — or to preserve that esteem once it already exists. Esteem can get the recipient onto the bodhisattva path, or advance him further, and this consequence is so momentous that it outweighs the danger posed by the recipient's possessing the gift object. Possessing objects creates the danger of attachment, and therefore being given objects creates the same danger; but the benefits of attraction and *prasāda* are such that the danger is worth it.

Objections and alternative interpretations

This interpretation of Śāntideva's approach to giving — that downward giving is beneficial to the recipient because it produces esteem, even though having the gift object itself may be harmful — is my own, and is not featured in any secondary literature of which I am aware. As I will shortly show, it differs greatly from widespread interpretations of Mahāyāna ethics. Readers may understandably be skeptical. Some may note features of Śāntideva's texts that suggest difficulties with this interpretation. I do not think, however, that any of these difficulties are sufficient to reject the interpretation. I examine four such difficulties here: that Śāntideva does not

claim that giving is for esteem explicitly at a general level; that the bodhisattva's gift of his body makes it difficult to benefit from esteem; that Śāntideva claims gifts do not harm beings; and finally that it might seem that the ethical revaluation of property applies only to bodhisattvas, not ordinary people.

First, one might ask why Śāntideva doesn't make this interpretation explicit himself. If possessing material goods is harmful but the benefits of receiving them from a bodhisattva outweigh this harm, why doesn't Śāntideva say this as a blanket claim, rather than in the specific cases from which I have extrapolated? The answer is in the nature of the ŚS as a text (and for that matter of the BCA). The ŚS is not supposed to answer every question an audience might bring to it; it is not a catechism or a FAQ. As its title implies, it is a training manual, not a reference manual; it provides the most important things his audience would need to know, rather than answering his questions. It identifies its purpose as training (ŚS 16) and as finding the vital points (*marmasthāna*s) of the *sūtra*s (ŚSK 3). Similarly, the BCA is a literary work for memorization; it does not attempt to be comprehensive. With both texts, we readers are left to do some interpretive work for ourselves.

Second, one might note that Śāntideva's bodhisattva gives away his *body*. (See Ohnuma 1998; Ohnuma 2000 for a discussion of such gifts.) Śāntideva generally speaks of this act in terms of giving away body *parts* to those who ask for them (ŚS 26-7); but these include essential parts like the heart and lungs (ŚS 25). And the idea that the bodhisattva might die from the gift, while not explicitly found in Śāntideva, is not unusual in Buddhist tradition; one finds it repeatedly in the Jātaka stories. But one might then ask, if the bodhisattva dies from giving a gift, what good is esteem — how will he be able to teach the recipient? The first answer, I think, is that the gift is primarily an act of renunciation; one is not even attached to life itself. But secondly, I suspect that esteem is not necessarily generated toward the individual bodhisattva giver, but toward bodhisattvas and the dharma in general. The esteem generated will help the recipient in future encounters with the Buddhist path.

Next, I have argued that receiving material goods can be harmful; why is it then that Śāntideva claims that "there is no gift that harms beings"[155]? I suspect that Śāntideva means that a gift which causes net harm is not a true

155. *nâsti satvôtpīḍanādānam*, ŚS 271.

gift; that only a gift which produces net benefit is worthy of the name, and that gifts presented by a bodhisattva will generally fall into the latter category, because of the *prasāda* and attraction they create.

Finally, one might propose a different way of resolving the paradox that one gives gifts which are proclaimed to be harmful. Since Śāntideva clearly sees the bodhisattva as more virtuous than the ordinary person, might it not be the case that possessing objects is dangerous only to the (aspiring) bodhisattva? There's no harm in objects that generate attachment in an ordinary person, the objection might run, since the ordinary person is already so deeply enmeshed in it. It's just dangerous for an aspiring bodhisattva, who has begun a fragile attempt to get *out* of attachment. So property should only be revalued in the case of the latter.

I find little in Śāntideva that supports this interpretation, however. He never says that ordinary people should follow a looser standard than bodhisattvas. One may *expect* that they will do so, since they don't know any better, but they still hurt themselves all the time by doing so. In general, if anything, standards are *less* strict for bodhisattvas, because bodhisattvas' compassion allows them to break rules for other beings' benefit (see ŚS 167-8, and the discussion of excellence in means in the following chapter). And their

attempt to escape attachment and suffering is not such a fragile thing — the awakening mind is *powerful*, the thing able to destroy huge amounts of bad karma (BCA I.6-12). Moreover, as we saw in the first and second chapters, the BCA and ŚS seem to speak to people at all levels of spiritual achievement — the opening praises of the awakening mind are most useful for those who do not yet have it. Ordinary people do not seem to be entirely excluded from the texts' purview. The texts give us little reason to believe that ordinary people are exempt from the dangers of possession.

Indeed, we saw above how bodhisattvas and buddhas can "purify" gifts given to them. They know the practices involved in preventing attachment to possessions, in a way that ordinary people may not; and they are likelier to find those practices important, given their motivation to follow the path. For these reasons, possessions would seem to be *less* dangerous for bodhisattvas than they are for ordinary people.

Individual and not institutional giving

The most significant objection to my interpretation is, I think, implicit in other interpretations of Śāntideva's work, most notably Stephen Jenkins's.

I think that ultimately Jenkins misses something important in Śāntideva's work, something that has far-reaching implications.

My interpretation so far suggests that *the* way a bodhisattva's downward gifts benefit their ordinary recipients is by bringing them closer to the bodhisattva's teaching — that the gifts likely produce no *material* benefit at all. One might object: what about poverty alleviation? Perhaps giving jewelry to a king produces material dangers and is valuable only for spiritual benefit, but what about giving food to the hungry?

Stephen Jenkins (2003, 40-1), in particular, asks whether bodhisattvas act to relieve poverty, and does note a passage in Śāntideva's work that suggests they might not: "If the perfection of generosity [were] making the world non-poor, then why is the world of the previous Protectors [buddhas] poor even now?"[156] In response to this passage, he provides many quotations from texts identified as Mahāyāna which, he claims, do recommend that bodhisattvas relieve poverty. And one of these quotes is from the ŚS: "And he gives the best fine food to beings wishing to eat... and he satisfies poor beings through possessions (*bhoga*s)... and he makes a distribution of possessions to

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156. *adaridraṃ jagat kṛtvā dānapāramitā yadi* | *jagad daridram adyâpi sā kathaṃ pūrvatāyinām*, BCA V.9.

beings afflicted by poverty."[157] Jenkins is absolutely correct to note that Śāntideva's bodhisattva *does* attempt to provide for poor people. The question is: why does he do it?

The passage Jenkins cites is in the context of increasing one's own strength or power (*bala*). In a quote from the Tathāgataguhya Sūtra (ŚS 274), the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi says that there are ten ways to obtain strength like his; giving food and satisfying the poor are among them. What is the causal connection between these actions and becoming stronger? It seems to be that, by giving these items up and producing esteem in their beneficiaries, one receives good karma and thereby is reborn as a stronger person in future lives. So the rationale offered here for provision to the poor is the

157. *jighatsitānāṃ ca satvānām agraṃ varabhojanaṃ dadāti... daridrāṃś ca satvān bhogaiḥ saṃtarpayati... daridraduṣkhitānāṃ ca satvānāṃ bhogasaṃvibhāgaṃ karoti*, ŚS 274. Jenkins (2003, 48n17) takes the quote from Bendall and Rouse's translation, which suggests that the first phrase refers more clearly to poverty alleviation than it actually does, by rendering it "When any are hungry he gives them the best food." Śāntideva's term is *jighatsita*, a desiderative from √*ghas* "eat," rather than a term deriving from √*kṣudh*, the root more commonly used for hunger, especially the kind of chronic hunger that could come from poverty — he may well mean that the bodhisattva serves fancy delicacies to gourmets. However, this translation issue does not itself annul Jenkins's overall point, since the later parts of the passage are clearly referring to poverty (*dāridrya*).

bodhisattva's own development, not any material benefit to them. Moreover, when Śāntideva discusses alleviating poverty, he rarely gives it pride of place over any other kind of giving. For example, in the final chapter of the BCA, Śāntideva conducts a redirection of good karma (*pariṇāmanā*), attempting to use his accumulated good karma to provide for others; he tries to provide food and drink, but as part of a list that includes perfumes and ornaments (X.20).[158]

In the passages where Śāntideva discusses providing for the poor, material benefit is not mentioned as a reason for doing so. The rationale the text *does* give more often is the one I argued for above: that bodhisattvas give to the poor, as to anyone else, for the purpose of helping them appreciate the dharma and the bodhisattva path. We hear that "in ages of famine, [bodhisattvas] become food and drink"; but the next sentence adds, "having

158. In this regard, one of Bendall and Rouse's (1971) translations is misleading. In Śāntideva's longest and most systematic discussion of giving in ŚS I, the recipient is frequently referred to as a *yācanaka*. Bendall and Rouse render this term as "beggar," which is a sense it *can* have, but the word more broadly means "requester, one who requests," from the root *yāc* "ask, request"; and nothing in the passage suggests that the *yācanaka* is necessarily poor or a mendicant, as the term "beggar" would imply.

removed hunger and thirst, they teach the dharma to living beings."[159] So, while Śāntideva's bodhisattva does give to the poor for their benefit, the rationale given for doing so does not involve material benefit. Indeed, given Śāntideva's explicit revaluation of material goods, it would seem likely that there is no real material benefit at all.

This rationale implies that the direct encounter of the recipient with the giving bodhisattva is of central importance to all giving which is intended to benefit the recipient. As a result, it does not seem that a gift through an impersonal organization could have the crucial effect. And nowhere does Śāntideva urge that the bodhisattva give to the poor through an institution or government. Indeed, on the rare occasions that he offers advice to kings, we might note, it is that they give their kingdoms up entirely! ŚS 19-34 lavishly detail the bodhisattva's giving, going on at length about the many things he is supposed to give up. A number of times there, a kingdom (*rājya*) is listed as an item among these, as are other things only a king might possess. For example, he cites the Vajradhvaja Sūtra[160] as describing the bodhisattva in

159. *durbhikṣântarakalpeṣu bhavantī pānabhojanam* | *kṣudhāpipāsām apanīya dharmaṃ deśenti prāṇinām*, ŚS 325.

160. Although it may have existed independently in India, this sūtra is now usually known as a portion of the Avataṃsaka Sūtra, which is in turn

the following way:

> It also said: “And giving himself to all beings or receiving the presence of all buddhas, he is giving a kingdom or a citadel, or a city or capital decorated with all ornaments, or, according to worthiness, giving up his whole entourage to those who ask; or giving his son, daughter and wife to those who ask; or abandoning his entire dwelling, and likewise giving all enjoyments.”[161]

The king’s giving away of his kingdom in such passages might seem to be the closest that Śāntideva comes to urging that giving happen through a political institution; but the giving seems to be treated as a matter of the king giving his own property as any other bodhisattva would. It is explicitly not a matter of using the power of state institutions to improve others’ material conditions.

Such advice reflects Śāntideva’s more general distaste for political institutions. In a discussion of knowledge and textual learning — which kinds

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better known by the Chinese name Huayan Sūtra.

161. *punar atrâivâha* | *ātmānaṃ ca sarvasatvānāṃ niryātayann upasthānaṃ vā sarvabuddhānām upādadāno rājyaṃ vā parityaja paṭabhedakaṃ vā nagararājadhānīṃ sarvâlaṃkārabhūṣitāṃ yathârhaṃ vā yācanakeṣu sarvaparivāraṃ parityaja putraduhitṛbhāryāṃ vā dadāno yācanakebhyaḥ sarvagṛhaṃ vâpasṛjan* | *yāvat sarvôpabhogaparibhogān vā dadānaḥ*, ŚS 27.

are valuable and which not — he specifically includes texts on law and politics (*daṇḍanīti śāstra*s) among the kinds of knowledge which are fruitless (*apârtha*), are opposed to liberation (*mokṣapratikūla*), lead to delusion (*saṃmoha*), and are therefore to be avoided (*parivarjitavya*) by one who has set out or is established on the bodhisattva path.[162] The bodhisattva, Śāntideva tells us, does not concern himself with politics. The only institution of any sort that he treats in a positive light is the monastic order (*saṅgha*), and his discussion of it is a small part of the ŚS without its own chapter heading (ŚS 55-9).

It would seem, then, that Śāntideva's works disagree with Engaged Buddhist views that see material deprivation as a real cause of suffering, and political change as a way of remedying that suffering. The present Dalai Lama, for example, claims that "the people of the poorer nations, which do not have the resources to cope, also suffer both from the richer nations' excesses and from the pollution of their own cruder technology." (Dalai Lama XIV

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162. *lokâyataśāstrāṇi daṇḍanītiśāstrāṇi kārkhedaśāstrāṇi vādavidyāśāstrāṇi kumārakrīḍāśāstrāṇi jambhakavidyāśāstrāṇi* | | *pe* | | *yāny api tad anyāni kānicin mokṣapratikūlāni śāstrāṇi saṃmohāya saṃvartante tāni sarvāṇi bodhisatvayānasaṃprasthitena parivarjayitavyānîti*, ŚS 192.

1999, 166) For him, suffering derives directly from external causes like poverty. It is not merely that one does not find this kind of sentiment in Śāntideva's texts, but moreover that his ideas seem to imply its contrary. This is not to say that the Dalai Lama's claims are wrong, merely to note how much they differ from those of Śāntideva, as I have interpreted him.

Engaged Buddhists are far from being the only students of Buddhism to miss the possibility that provision of goods may not benefit recipients in a material way. Donald Lopez, looking at similar claims in Asaṅga's Bodhisattvabhūmi, finds a passage making similar claims ("He gives food to those who want to eat.") So, Lopez says, the bodhisattva is "portrayed here as a cosmic social worker, not merely seeking the ultimate spiritual welfare of sentient beings but providing for their most immediate, existential needs as well." (Lopez 1988, 195) But Lopez does not appear to mention or consider the possibility that "providing for their most immediate, existential needs" may be nothing more than a tool for seeking their "ultimate spiritual welfare."

Now I do not want to exaggerate the significance of this point. *Some* Mahāyāna texts do treat compassionate giving as meeting material needs, and material deprivation as producing real suffering. A notable example is the Upāsakaśīla Sūtra, a Mahāyāna text available only in Chinese. Unlike

Śāntideva's works, the Upāsakaśīla gives pride of place to gifts to the poor. Here the recipients of gifts are specified as two — the "field of blessings (the Sangha)" and the "field of poverty" (Shih 1994, 62) — and the second is given such emphasis that if a bodhisattva has little wealth, "he gives *first* to the poor, *then* to the fields of blessing." (Shih 1994, 41, emphasis added) And these discussions of giving to the poor make little reference to esteem or to their future awakening; instead, its discussion of the perfection of giving points out that giving "can relieve others from suffering from hunger or thirst." (Shih 1994, 100) Here, suffering seems to come from the states of hunger and thirst themselves, not from one's craving and delusion. Some premodern Mahāyāna Buddhists, then, have apparently found this a sustainable position. Śāntideva, however, is not one of them, and we should not treat him as if he is. And while I cannot treat the question in detail here, I do suspect that the positions of many other Mahāyāna texts will look closer to Śāntideva's view than to that of the Upāsakaśīla.

Conclusion

Why does Śāntideva urge compassionate giving of the goods that he has revalued? Because it is not possessing the goods that benefits the recipient. The bodhisattva may give goods in a way intended to benefit himself more than his recipient. But to the extent that the recipient benefits, the benefit derives from the gift *encounter* and not the gift *object*. The point of a bodhisattva's compassionate gift-giving is that the recipients develop a sense of esteem toward the bodhisattva, which is of great benefit in helping them to come closer to being bodhisattvas themselves. This esteem is important enough to outweigh the effect of their having the gift object in their possession, which, according to Śāntideva's ethical revaluation, is a net *negative*. In the right context, giving is good and receiving is also good; it is *having* that is bad. The harm of having is outweighed by the benefits of receiving. However, these benefits require a direct gift encounter between giver and recipient. Providing goods to beings through institutions, especially political institutions, does not provide the corresponding benefit that outweighs the harm.

Discussions of Mahāyāna ethics, including discussions of Śāntideva himself, typically miss this point. They typically assume that since a

bodhisattva is full of compassion and altruism, and since he gives generously to benefit other beings including poor ones, he must be concerned about their material deprivation and ready to help provide goods for them politically. The premises are correct, but the reasoning misses a step. For the benefits of giving do not necessarily flow from what the recipient comes to possess; they may come from the gift encounter instead. Other Mahāyāna texts may identify a direct material benefit from gift-giving, but Śāntideva's works are not among them.

So if we understand the reasoning for gift-giving as discussed in this chapter, I submit, we gain a much deeper understanding of the kind of ethical reasoning that occurs in Mahāyāna texts. We learn, that is, of a crucial distinction that might otherwise be glossed over, between giving compassionately for material benefit and giving compassionately to produce esteem. In addition, we notice that Śāntideva's texts provide relatively little support for Engaged Buddhist political concern with material deprivation. Finally, we are better equipped to see how Śāntideva can respond to contemporary critiques of ethical revaluation — a point that will have to wait until my seventh chapter.

V. Preventing revalued wrongdoing

We have now seen the implications of one kind of ethical revaluation in Śāntideva, where possessions, normally thought of as positive, are revalued as negative — or at least as neutral, for a bodhisattva who receives them properly. Now I will explore a similar set of implications for a revaluation in the opposite direction — others' wrongdoing, normally thought of as negative, is revalued as neutral and even positive. Here too, an apparent contradiction follows from an unexamined assumption; without that assumption, we are in a better position to understand Śāntideva, and to some extent Mahāyāna ethics in general.

The apparent contradiction in question has to do with preventing others' wrongdoing. We saw in chapter 3 how Śāntideva encourages us to revalue others' misdeeds — insults, physical abuse, even interference with our practice of the bodhisattva path — as good and helpful, because they give us an opportunity to practise patience. And yet he also tells us to prevent such misdeeds, whether they are done to others or to us. Why should this be?

The unexamined assumption here is that one should prevent wrongdoing for the victim's sake. It is this assumption which is incompatible

with ethical revaluation of the wrongdoing, because it treats the wrongdoing as itself causing direct harm to the victim. Śāntideva, I will argue, claims that one should prevent wrongdoing for the sake of the wrongdoer himself. Here as before, when we interpret Śāntideva in this new way, we find him going against the grain of the common understanding of Mahāyāna ethics.

Why prevent revalued wrongdoing?

To revalue others' wrongdoing seems to get Śāntideva in a number of troubles. One might well ask: if I am to long for others' destruction of my good karma, as we saw Śāntideva encourages us to do, then shouldn't I try to encourage them to do more of it to me? For that matter, shouldn't I encourage others to wrong third parties as well, so that the third parties get *their* chance to practice patience? Perhaps I should even wrong others as much as I can myself!

This kind of revaluation, then, seems to take us to a dangerous antinomianism. It might seem that these "wrongs" are not in fact wrong at all. And the problem seems particularly acute in the case of a bodhisattva like oneself being harmed. Shouldn't one encourage the destruction of all

bodhisattvas' good karma, since they will take such acts as an opportunity for patience? Perhaps whenever one finds a bodhisattva, one should hinder his practice to give him an opportunity to develop patient endurance; and as a bodhisattva, one should see to it that others hinder one's practice as much as possible.

Something seems *prima facie* wrong about such a position. If good Buddhists took it as a duty to hinder bodhisattvas whenever possible, surely that would wind up creating far less overall benefit to beings, even if the bodhisattvas could develop their patience. Moreover, while examining various kinds of bad actions and the bad karma that they incur, Śāntideva stresses that making an obstacle to a bodhisattva is worse even than killing all the inhabitant of the Indian subcontinent.[163] Surely, one would think, a bodhisattva should try to *prevent* such wrongdoing, even to himself?

And indeed, in a number of places Śāntideva *does* advocate preventing others' wrongdoing — to ordinary people as well as to bodhisattvas. He claims

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163. *yaḥ kaścin mañjuśrīḥ kulaputro vā kuladuhitā vā jāmbūdvīpakān sarvasatvāñ jīvitād vyaparopya sarvasvaṃ haret* | *yo vânyo mañjuśrīḥ kulaputro vā kuladuhitā bodhisatvasyâikakuśalacittasyântarāyaṃ kuryād antaśas tiryagyonigatasyâpy ekâlopadānasahagatasya kuśalamūlasyântarāyaṃ kuryād ayaṃ tato 'saṃkhyeyataraṃ pāpaṃ prasavati*, ŚS 83-4.

that fully realized bodhisattvas do indeed prevent others' wrongdoing. Among the magical rays they emit from their foreheads is the safety-giving ray (*abhayaṃdada raśmi*); those affected by this ray are prevented from killing living creatures.[164] At the most extreme point, in pointing to the significance of excellence in means, he claims that there is "permission of the killing of a person about to commit a grave wrong (*ānantarya*), in the noble Ratnamegha [Sūtra]."[165] One not only should prevent others' wrongdoing, one may in extreme cases even kill them to stop it from happening. Why?

For the wrongdoer's sake

Śāntideva's texts make sense best if we see his concerns about wrongdoing as being for the sake of the *wrongdoer* and not the victim. Recall that what we saw revalued in chapter 3 was *others'* wrongdoing; and that ethical revaluation as I have explored it is a revaluation in terms of one's *own*

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164. *ye 'bhayena nimantrita satvāḥ prāṇibadhāt tu nivārita bhonti*, ŚS 338.

165. *āryaratnameghe ānantaryacikīrṣupuruṣamāraṇânujñānāt*, ŚS 168.

flourishing (and specifically one's ability to get further on the bodhisattva path). When others do something wrong to *you*, it may actually be good for you, because you can practise patience. But it is terrible for *them*. If you do something wrong to someone else, it may be good for them for the same reason — but it is terrible for *you*.

Śāntideva gives us evidence to support this position. When he urges that one prevent wrongdoing, he does not speak of protecting victims from harm; he speaks of protecting the wrongdoers from the bad karma that results from their actions. For example, in redirecting his own good karma, he wishes that his karma shake others out of their bad conduct — and that they be delighted in the reduction of bad karma.[166] In his description of fully realized bodhisattvas, he notes that they emit rays that reduce others' anger — in the name of giving those others patient endurance, as the third in a set of rays that affect others by giving them the bodhisattva's perfections. (ŚS 337)

Why are these actions so karmically bad? The main reason is surely anger. Anger's bad karmic consequences are tremendous, for reasons I have

166. *duḥśīlāḥ santu saṃvignāḥ pāpakṣayaratāḥ sadā*, BCA X.45.

discussed in the third chapter — it both creates suffering for oneself and limits one's ability to benefit other beings. Śāntideva opens BCA VI by stressing that "all this good action, giving and worship and the Buddhas, done over thousands of eras — anger destroys it."[167] The reference to good karma is not explicit here, but is clear enough, I think, and it is far from the only such reference.

The safety-giving ray might seem at first to have to do with protecting the victims of violence, making them safer. Śāntideva says that the beings enchanted by this ray are prevented from killing living beings, and that the frightened are protected by taking refuge in it.[168] But he says first that "beings touched by it [the ray] are protected from fear by it"[169] — and it is the specifically the beings enchanted (*nimantrita*) by the ray that are prevented from killing beings. It seems to me that the ray affects beings who would kill out of fear, protecting *them* from fear and thereby stopping them from

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167. *sarvam etat sucaritaṃ dānaṃ sugatapūjanaṃ* | *kṛtaṃ kalpasahasrair yat pratighaḥ pratihanti tat*, BCA VI.1.

168. *ye 'bhayena nimantrita satvāḥ prāṇibadhāt tu nivārita bhonti* | *trāyita yaccharaṇâgata bhītās tena bhayaṃdada raśmi nivṛttā*, Ś 338.

169. *tāyâbhayârdita satva saspṛṣṭāḥ*, ŚS 338.

killing — not protecting their victims from fear, at least not directly.

I see parallels to Śāntideva's approach in other Buddhist works on patient endurance. For example, in the 24th story of the Jātakamālā, the bodhisattva, born as a great ape, is betrayed by a man he has helped; the man tries and fails to kill him as he sleeps. As he sees what the man has done, the bodhisattva is overcome with sorrow, but only for the terrible karmic results that will strike his betrayer as a result (JM XXIV.25-34). The same happens in the Jātakamālā's version of the Kṣāntivādin story (see my third chapter). Andrew Skilton (2002, 124) mentions in a sentence that the main character's "forbearance is unshaken, but he grieves for the fate of the king." He does not note the significance of the point, however, as exemplifying an apparently wider (but rarely discussed) Buddhist view that the wrongdoer, and not the victim, suffers from wrongdoing.

Harming bodhisattvas and harming ordinary people

I have claimed that Śāntideva revalues others' wrongdoing positively,

as an opportunity for the victim to practise patient endurance; and that consequently, one prevents that wrongdoing for the wrongdoer's sake and not the victim's. Now one might wish to criticize this interpretation by pointing out that most people are unlikely to practise patient endurance in response to others' wrongdoing. It might be that, for Śāntideva, *bodhisattvas* benefit from wrongs done to them, but that ordinary people themselves really suffer when they are wronged, because they will not use those wrongs as an opportunity to generate patient endurance. So one only prevents wrongs against bodhisattvas for the wrongdoer's sake; one prevents wrongs against others for the sake of the victim.

The point is fairly made, and requires that my claims here be qualified: because ordinary people are not likely to practise patient endurance, others' wrongdoing is indeed not likely to benefit them. However, it also seems to be the case that others' wrongdoing does not *hurt* them either. Others' wrongdoing is not revalued as positive in this caes, but it *is* revalued as neutral. This point is in some sense a logical consequence of the earlier revaluations we have already seen: if praise or property do not matter, then neither do their destruction.

For if ordinary people were indeed hurt by others' wrongdoing, one

might expect Śāntideva to say something at some point about ensuring that others do not get harmed by it, especially given that he does talk about preventing wrongdoing. But he never says anything about protecting the victims of harm except in the context of preventing the wrongdoers. And if ordinary people were hurt by others' wrongdoing where bodhisattvas are not, one might also expect him to say that it is more important to prevent such wrongdoing when the victims are ordinary people. But in fact, Śāntideva says far *more* about preventing wrongdoing when the victim is a bodhisattva.

We saw already how Śāntideva stresses that making an obstacle to a bodhisattva — even merely taking a morsel of food from him — is worse even than killing all the subcontinent's inhabitants. (ŚS 83-4) Śāntideva then provides the following reasoning:

> Mañjuśrī, whoever would produce envy and jealousy for a bodhisattva among others — for him, on that occasion, for that reason, three dangers should worried about. Which three? The danger of being born in hell, the danger of being born blind, the danger of being born on the frontier.[170]

The ensuing section of the ŚS makes similar claims about bad things

170. *yaḥ kaścin mañjuśrīḥ parakuleṣu bodhisatvasyêrṣyāmātsaryaṃ kuryāt tasya tasmin samaye tato nidānaṃ trīṇi bhayāni pratikāṅkṣitavyāni* | *katamāni trīṇi* | *narakôpapattibhayaṃ jātyandhabhayaṃ pratyanta-janmôpapattibhayaṃ cêti*, ŚS 84.

that one might do to a bodhisattva: "Those who, unrestrained, make pressure (*utpīḍā*) on bodhisattvas, are cooked in the Pratāpana hell, filled with sharp painful fire."[171] Hindering a bodhisattva, or even insulting him (ŚS 85-6), produces the karmic consequence of bad rebirths, ranging from birth in an outlying region to birth in a painful hell. But as in the other cases we have examined, it produces this consequence for the hinderer; there are not necessarily bad consequences for the bodhisattva so afflicted.

Why do such acts produce these potentially severe consequences for their agents? Śāntideva does not draw out the specific connection here, but there must be some bad mental state, or affliction (*kleśa*), associated with a hell rebirth. He notes elsewhere that the afflictions are "the executioners of the condemned, even in the hells and similar places..."[172] More broadly, he claims that the hells, and fear and suffering more generally, are *created* by the mind alone (BCA V.6-7), even though he does not subscribe to the more general Yogācāra position that *everything* is created by the mind (BCA IX.17-37). What mental states might be sending such people to such awful

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171. *pratāpane ca pacyante tīvraduṣkhânalâkule | utpīḍāṃ bodhisatvānāṃ ye kurvanti asaṅgatāḥ*, ŚS 85.

172. *narakâdiṣv api vadhyaghātakāḥ*, BCA IV.35.

results?

The first and most obvious answer is anger, as in other cases. But, one might note, anger is likely to be involved in mass murder as well. Why are the consequences for hindering or abusing a bodhisattva so much worse?

I suspect that the problem with such acts is the utter lack of esteem (*śraddhā*) that they represent. We saw in the previous chapter how and why esteem toward more advanced beings is greatly valued in Śāntideva's work. After describing the terrible consequences of hindering bodhisattvas, Śāntideva quickly turns to the beneficial consequences of what appear to be the opposite situations — situations where the right approach to a bodhisattva generates vast amounts of good karma. And the most important such approach is to have a *prasanna* mind, a mind affected by *prasāda* (the peaceful, pleasurable admiring state of which esteem is a type, as discussed in the previous chapter):

> If a noble son or daughter, having released every being that had entered a jailhouse from the jailhouse, were to establish them in the pleasure of being a great emperor or a god; or, Mañjuśrī, he or she were to desire, with a *prasanna* mind, the sight (*darśana*) of one intent on the Mahāyāna, and declare his glory — this one would therefore produce much greater good karma.[173]

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173. *sarvasatvān bandhanâgārapraviviṣṭān bandhanâgārān*

In addition, it is far worse to defame a bodhisattva than to burn a stupa, because buddhas come from bodhisattvas and stupas come from buddhas (ŚS 86). But in case one were to read this as straightforward consequentialist reasoning — hindering a bodhisattva means fewer stupas in the future — Śāntideva specifies that his meaning is something quite different: "Those who have not honoured a bodhisattva, have not honoured all the buddhas; having honoured a bodhisattva, people have honoured all the buddhas. The bodhisattvas are to be worshipped by one desiring to worship all the buddhas with the supreme worship."[174] That is, from the perspective of one who is less advanced, a bodhisattva effectively *is* a buddha, and needs to be treated with the appropriate esteem if one is to advance on the path.

Esteem also seems to be central to Śāntideva's reasoning when he

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mocayitvā cakravartisukhe sthāpayed brahmatvasukhe vā | *yo vânyo mañjuśrīḥ kulaputro vā kuladuhitā vā mahāyānâdhimuktasya prasannacitto darśanâbhilāṣī bhaved varṇaṃ câsyôdāhared* | *ayaṃ tato 'saṃkhyeyataraṃ puṇyaṃ prasavatîti*, ŚS 87. I find Bendall and Rouse's (1971, 90) translation of *prasannacitta* as "kindly heart" misleading here; it suggests that one is in a position to generously benefit the bodhisattva one looks on, which is not the case.

174. *bodhisatvam asatkṛtya sarvabuddhâsatkṛtā bhavanti* | *bodhisatvaṃ satkṛtya sarvabuddhāḥ satkṛtā bhavanti* | *sarvabuddhān anuttarayā pūjayā pūjayitukāmena bodhisatvāḥ pūjayitavyāḥ*, ŚS 86.

specifies that one may kill to prevent a grave wrong. I use "grave wrong" to translate Śāntideva's term *ānantarya*, literally "immediate" — rendered in this context by Bendall and Rouse (1971, 168n1) and Edgerton (1970b, 95) as "acts bringing immediate retribution." The "retribution" in question would most likely be the destruction of all of one's good karma. Śāntideva provides a list of five such grave wrongs at ŚS 60, equivalent to the standard list that Edgerton (1970b, 95-6) finds in multiple Buddhist Sanskrit texts: killing one's mother or father, killing an *arhat* (buddha, in this case), dividing the community (*saṅgha*) or shedding a buddha's blood. What these acts seem to have in common is acting with ill will toward beings that should be the objects of one's respect or esteem. This would seem to be why one's parents, likely to be ordinary people, are put in a similar category with buddhas.

We therefore have a reason why the bodhisattva should prevent others from wrongdoing toward him — or toward other bodhisattvas. The wrongdoing could actually benefit the bodhisattva; but he must nevertheless prevent it *for the others' sake*, because of the bad consequences it will have for them. This point suggests another reason underlying his earlier point that "wrongdoers are hard to find, because nobody wrongs innocent me." The bodhisattva will *try* to prevent others from wronging him, because doing so

will have bad consequences for their esteem and their karma. But if he fails, it is a great opportunity for him, as much as he might regret the damage done to others. Thus it is significant that while Śāntideva says enemies are to be longed for, he does *not* say they should be *sought out*.

Returning to the point that ordinary people are unlikely to practise patient endurance: this would indeed logically mean that others' wrongdoing will not logically *benefit* an ordinary person, since the ability to practise patient endurance is what constitutes that benefit. But Śāntideva's works nevertheless seem to suggest that wrongdoing does not actually *harm* its victims, even when they are ordinary people — or, at least, that the harm done is so insignificant as to be negligible. So the ethical revaluation of wrongdoing, while significant, becomes somewhat more complex: wrongdoing is positive for a bodhisattva targeted by it, neutral for a targeted ordinary person, and negative for the wrongdoer — far more so if it targets a bodhisattva. And it is because of this negative effect on the wrongdoer, not any effect on the victim, that wronging a bodhisattva is so much worse than wronging an ordinary person.

Excellence in means

On wrongs to bodhisattvas, as on gift-giving, we have now seen the major role that esteem (*śraddhā*) plays in Śāntideva's ethical worldview. But the very significance of esteem may itself pose a problem. We saw in the previous chapter just how important it is for the bodhisattva to produce esteem in others who are less advanced — that sometimes one might even give weapons as a gift, or alcohol to alcoholics, in order to enhance others' esteem and get them on the path. But if one now prevents others' bad actions to save them from the resulting bad karma, such an action would seem opposed to the kinds of action that we saw Śāntideva advocate in that previous chapter. If a bodhisattva gives weapons or gives alcohol to alcoholics, it seems to suggest that the important thing is the esteem created by the bodhisattva's own actions, not the bad karma incurred by actions the recipient undertakes. One is trying to be liked, admired. But if, on the other hand, one *prevents* a bad action that someone wants to commit, won't that create hostility and diminish that person's esteem?

Here, I think, it is important to turn to the concept of excellence in means (*upāyakauśalya*). This common Mahāyāna concept is best known as a way of explaining the existence of other Buddhist traditions, as in texts like

the Lotus Sūtra: the Buddha preached mainstream Buddhism as a clever way to reach people who were not ready to receive the superior teaching of the Mahāyāna. (See Pye 1978 for a book-length discussion.) The term comes to take on a number of different senses in Buddhist tradition (see Harvey 2000, 134-40). For Śāntideva, the idea most frequently comes up when he quotes the Upāyakauśalya Sūtra, a text which claims that bodhisattvas may break standard precepts or rules out of compassion.[175]

Excellence in means takes on considerable importance in some contemporary discussions of Śāntideva's ethics (e.g. Clayton 2006, 102-9) because it is under this rubric that Śāntideva comes closest to addressing the "hard cases" so beloved of contemporary moral philosophy, such as situations when one seems called to kill in order to prevent a greater evil. While discussing excellence in means, he explains that behaviours normally forbidden can be permitted out of compassion, even sex. So too, it is to explain the importance of excellence in means that Śāntideva notes that one is permitted to kill someone about to commit a grave wrong. The idea is important to me here for similar reasons, in that it seems to be a key

175. The sūtra exists in Chinese and has been translated into English twice (Chang 1991, 427-68; Tatz 1994).

principle involved in what we might call Śāntideva's casuistry — his examination of particular cases where different pieces of advice seem to collide.

For Śāntideva, I think, a key component of excellence in means is that it *is* an excellence — a skill and a virtue, which allows one to respond appropriately to difficult situations. There is no one formula or principle for action that Śāntideva sets out in advance (along the lines of "act to bring about the greatest happiness for the greatest number" or "act only according to that maxim you can also will to be a universal law"). While it may be that, as Clayton (2006, 102-11) claims, there are some elements of consequentialist reasoning in Śāntideva, more often the bodhisattva is called on to exercise judgement once his excellence is already well developed: when Śāntideva says that "even the forbidden is permitted," it is specifically "for a compassionate one who has sight of the purpose"[176]; that is, it depends on the agent's ability to exercise discretion in the name of compassion.

This level of discretion comes out in the multiple places in Śāntideva's work where difficult cases come up. When he approves of the killing of

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176. *niṣiddham apy anujñātaṃ kṛpālor arthadarśinaḥ*, BCA V.84.

someone about to commit a grave wrong, he says only that there is "permission" (*anujñāna*), not that one needs to do it. Similarly, in the case of alcoholics, alcohol *may* be given; Śāntideva uses the gerundive form *deya* (ŚS 271), and the gerundive in *-ya* does not have the imperative force of the gerundive in *-tavya* (Coulson 1992, 188-9).

Śāntideva explicitly refers to consequences in the case of giving a weapon: one may do so after the "consideration of good or bad consequences" (*anubadhagurulāghavavicāra*, Ś 271). This is still a consideration or reflection rather than a maximizing or weighing; "consideration", *vicāra*, is literally "moving around (in the mind)". A weighing of some sort comes across in introducing the possibility that one might have sex out of compassion: "even then, if one should see a greater benefit (*artha*) to beings, one may discard the training."[177] Some sort of consequentialist maximizing seems at work here, although I would not agree with Clayton (2006, 107) that such concern for consequences means that these "examples of *upāya* become problematic from the perspective of a virtue ethic"; for Śāntideva, as we have seen in previous chapters, any true "benefit" to other beings will ultimately be

177. *atho tato 'py adhikaṃ satvārthaṃ paśyet śikṣām nikṣipet*, ŚS 167.

an increase in their virtue.[178]

What does all of this mean for the problem at hand, of producing esteem in others and saving them from bad karma? It would seem that in this case as in others, the bodhisattva's discretion is required. For a bodhisattva who is just starting out and whose compassion is not yet well developed, it may be best not to interfere in others' bad actions. For a more advanced bodhisattva, compassion may recommend such intervention, or may not. Excellence in means is a matter of exercising appropriate discretion, on compassionate grounds, with attention to the particulars of the situation.

Indeed, excellence in means might on some occasions require the kind of behaviour normally treated as wrongdoing. If my interpretation is correct, it would in fact leave open at least the logical possibility that someone who is an equal or superior could actually be justified in hindering or abusing

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178. In that sense the approach seen in these passages could be called a "virtue consequentialism." For similar approaches some have adopted Philip Ivanhoe's (1991) term "character consequentialism." But Ivanhoe's use of the term for the Confucian view he describes is curious; he never explains what makes it consequentialist, and indeed says that on that view some goods are to be valued intrinsically for their own sakes, *not* for their consequences (Ivanhoe 1991, 56). For this reason, as Keown (1996, 343-8) has noted, "character consequentialism" — at least as Ivanhoe describes it — is no consequentialism at all, but simply a virtue ethic.

someone who is lower or inferior, as long as it was done with the intention of creating patient endurance or a related benefit, and done by someone in sufficient control of himself to avoid having it shade back over into anger. The autobiography of the Tibetan saint Milarepa suggests that the Tibetans, in a tradition where Śāntideva was enormously influential, may have taken up this approach. Milarepa's guru Marpa puts him through long ordeals, continually requiring him to build towers with his hands and then telling him to tear them down because they weren't good enough and build new ones, even as his hands are raw and his back is sore and bloody (Lhalungpa 1977, 48-71). At the end, Marpa tells him it was all necessary to purify him of his bad karma (Lhalungpa 1977, 73).

Avoiding what one should long for

One objecting to my portrayal of ethical revaluation might note how Śāntideva tells us at certain points to avoid "fools" (*bāla*) who will destroy our good karma. Here they seem to be treated as genuinely dangerous — making one skeptical of whether their wrongdoing is really being revalued. For example, as part of his praise of forest renunciation, he describes the fickle

behaviours in which foolish ordinary people participate: “In an instant, they become friends; in an instant, they become enemies. At an occasion for satisfaction, they get angry. Ordinary people are hard to please.”[179] As a result, “Those spoken of are enraged at well-being, and they turn me away from well-being. If [what is] from them is not listened to, they go, angry, to a bad rebirth.”[180] The “turn *me* away from well-being” is particularly noteworthy in the context of the present chapter: these wrongs do appear to affect their victim negatively, not merely the wrongdoer. Indeed the karmic consequences of association with fools are severe: “Self-conceit, censure of others, talk of the joys of samsara — these are some inevitable bad karma from a fool to a fool.”[181] And so Śāntideva arrives at the conclusion: “One should flee far from a fool.”[182]

He makes the point most explicitly in passages praising forest

179. *kṣaṇād bhavanti suhṛdo bhavanti ripavaḥ kṣaṇāt* | *toṣasthāne prakupyanti durārādhāḥ pṛthagjanāḥ*, BCA VIII.10.

180. *hitamuktāḥ prakupyanti vārayanti ca māṃ hitāt* | *atha na śrūyate teṣāṃ kupitā yānti durgatim*, BCA VIII.11.

181. *ātmotkarṣaḥ parāvarṇaḥ saṃsāraratisaṃkathā* | *ityādy avaśyam aśubhaṃ kiṃcid bālasya bālataḥ*, BCA VIII.13.

182. *bālād dūraṃ palāyeta*, BCA VIII.15.

renunciation (BCA VIII.9-15 and ŚS 193-4), but it is not limited to the context of that practice. He also speaks of it in two different places in the third chapter of the ŚS. The topic of ŚS III is not forest renunciation or the like, but "the protection of the likes of the dharma teacher" (*dharma-bhāṇakâdirakṣā*) — ensuring that one can teach the dharma properly without endangering one's own path or that of others. Here Śāntideva specifies that "the bodhisattva must avoid every bad friend, by every means,"[183] in order to become "excellent in the means of avoiding the acts of Māra" (*mārakarmaparihārôpāyakuśalo*, ŚS 51). And he goes on to explain what a "bad friend" (*akalyāṇamitra*) is:

> And there as well, the characteristics of the bad friend are discussed: The avoidance of the karmically bad friend (*pāpamitra*) is to be known by the avoidance of a person who has failed at properly restrained conduct; similarly, by the avoidance of a person who has failed at insight, at conduct or at livelihood; by the avoidance of a person who takes pleasure in company; by the avoidance of an indifferent person; by the avoidance of a person who is delighted by samsara; by the avoidance of a person who turns away from awakening; by the avoidance of association with householders, the avoidance of a karmically bad friend is to be known.[184]

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183. *iha bodhisatvo 'kalyāṇamitraṃ sarveṇa sarvaṃ parivarjayati*, ŚS 51-2.

184. *atrâiva câkalyāṇamitralakṣaṇam uktaṃ | śīlavipannapudgala-*

We see here that the bad friend is specifically identified as a *karmically* bad friend (*pāpamitra*). Moreover, it is not merely that the friend's own karma is bad; one must avoid him for the sake of one's own ability to avoid Māra, the evil tempter. Elsewhere too, while making confessions, he describes bad karma that has arrived for him in numerous ways, among them "association with a karmically bad friend" (*pāpamitrâgama*, ŚS 164); and speaks of his mind being addled by the afflictions (*kleśa*s) "because of the power of the bad friend"[185]. The "bad friends" are not identified as ordinary people (*pṛthagjana*s), as the people to be avoided were identified in the forest passages, but the thrust of the advice given is the same: one must avoid those who damage one's good karma and produce bad karma.

So, the advice to avoid people who damage one's karma is not limited to a specific meditative context. But neither is the advice that they are to be longed for. While such advice does not appear outside of BCA VI, that chapter

vivarjanatayā pāpamitraparivarjanā veditavyā | *evaṃ dṛṣṭivipannâcāra-vipannâjīvavipannapudgalavivarjanatayā* | *saṅgaṇikârāmapudgala-vivarjanatayā* | *kuśīdapudgalavivarjanatayā* | *saṃsārâbhiratapudgala-vivarjanatayā* | *bodhiparāṅmukhapudgalaparivarjanatayā* | *gṛhisaṃsarga-vivarjanatayā pāpamitraparivarjanā veditavyā*, ŚS 52.

185. *pāpamitravaśāc câiva kleśavyākulacetasā*, ŚS 161.

is nowhere suggested to be a limited meditative context. Unlike BCA VIII, it does not introduce itself as dealing in specific situations, but speaks in universal terms about the dangers of anger and the virtues of patient endurance. So it is not that one should long for karmically bad people in the context of one form of practice while avoiding them in others. Rather, he claims both to be true at the same time. Why might this be?

The answer to this point, I think, lies in the value and nature of patient endurance. Patience against wrongdoing is deeply valuable in Śāntideva's eyes. But just like enduring suffering, it requires that one endure something *unpleasant*. The "fools" here are destroying good karma in a pleasant way, as apparent friends — they do not risk making one angry or frustrated, and therefore do not create the opportunity for patient endurance. And since those who destroy one's good karma pleasantly are not creating the opportunity for patient endurance, they are *not* to be longed for, but rather escaped. So we do need to further qualify the claim that others' wrongdoing is revalued positively. Others' *unpleasant* wrongdoing is revalued as fully positive — it seems bad for us but is in fact good. Their *pleasant* wrongdoing, on the other hand, seems to fall under the earlier category of relationships — something which seems good for us but is in fact bad.

This interpretation implies that buddhas, and probably fully realized bodhisattvas, likely should *not* long for enemies — since their patient endurance is already developed fully. Such an idea is supported by BCA VI.64, which argues that one should not feel anger even at the destruction of stūpas or buddha images, “for the buddhas and so on have no distress” (*buddhādīnāṃ na hi vyathā*). For buddhas — as, it seems, for ordinary people — others’ wrongdoing is revalued only as neutral, not as positive.

Individual and not social wrongdoers

In the last chapter, we saw that although Śāntideva’s bodhisattva does indeed relieve poverty, as some interpreters have claimed, he does not do so out of a concern for material deprivation; and as a result, political action seems less effective as a way of achieving the bodhisattva’s goals. The findings of this chapter have a similar implication. Although Śāntideva’s bodhisattva does indeed prevent others’ wrongdoing, he does not do so because the victim of the wrongdoing is harmed, but because the wrongdoer is harmed. This position also seems to imply a diminished concern with political action and institutions.

My interpretation of Śāntideva therefore contrasts again with the views of the present Dalai Lama, whose views take a great deal of their inspiration from Śāntideva's works. For him, there are forms of suffering "which arise as a consequence of such phenomena as war, poverty, violence, crime — even things like illiteracy and certain diseases." (Dalai Lama XIV 1999, 133-4) More specifically:

> Those who suffer most in today's armed conflicts are the innocent — not only the families of those fighting but, in far greater numbers, civilians who often do not even play a direct role. Even after the war is over, there continues to be enormous suffering due to land mines and poisoning from the use of chemical weapons — not to mention the economic hardship it brings. (Dalai Lama XIV 1999, 204-5)

Since political institutions and the social conditions they create or sustain can create real suffering in this way, "reality compels us to tackle our problems at the level of society at the same time as that of the individual." (Dalai Lama XIV 1999, 180) And so he is "convinced that universal responsibility means that compassion belongs in the political arena too." (Dalai Lama XIV 1999, 173)

Our explorations here, however, would seem to suggest that

Śāntideva's works present a viewpoint at odds with most of these claims.[186] Suffering is a consequence of one's mental states; in explaining why the cultivation of mindfulness is important, he tells us that "one who knows the truth will say that all fears and immeasurable sufferings come from the mind only."[187] By contrast, nowhere does he treat external harms, such as war and crime and poisoning, as creating suffering in a significant way. We should likely *prevent* all of these things, but to the extent that he ever tells us to prevent them (which he does relatively rarely), he says to do so only because of the way that they affect those responsible for them — wrongdoers, not victims. There is little if any evidence in Śāntideva's own writing that he sees these as significant sources of suffering to their vicctims.

One could perhaps therefore argue that a bodhisattva needs to fight political wrongdoing, to save the warmongers and exploiters from themselves, so that even on Śāntideva's grounds, "compassion belongs in the political arena too." No such claim, however, presents itself in Śāntideva's writings. On

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186. Again, I do not mean to say that the Dalai Lama's claims are *wrong*, only that his perspective is very different from the views that I have found in Śāntideva's texts.

187. *yasmād bhayāni sarvāṇi duḥkhāny apramitāni ca* | *cittād eva bhavantîti kathitaṃ tattvavādinā*, BCA V.6.

the contrary, as we saw in the previous chapter, Śāntideva claims that knowledge of politics is fruitless because it leads to delusion and is opposed to liberation, and is therefore to be avoided by the bodhisattva; he claims furthermore that kings should give their kingdoms away.

Now, on the view his texts appear to articulate, it might make sense that, if one is in a position to affect political actors, one should indeed attempt to stop their wrongdoing as one would stop anyone else's. However, this would seem to remain at the level of the individual politicians — one would aim to change the people, not the laws, and any change in the laws would be a side effect. In the political arena as in any other — except perhaps that of monastic institutions — Śāntideva's texts tell us to "tackle our problems" at the level of the individual and not of society.

Conclusion

To prevent wrongdoing, then, is compatible with ethical revaluation, because one does it for the sake of the wrongdoer and not the victim. Abuse, insults, even destruction of good karma do not actually hurt their target — if the target is a bodhisattva, he actually benefits, because he can create patient

endurance. This is so, at least, if the wrongdoing is unpleasant. If it is *pleasant* — if people do one wrong by leading one away from the bodhisattva path to enjoyable activities — only then is the target really hurt. But in all of these cases, the one *doing* the wrong is harmed by so doing, and that is why the wrongdoing needs to be prevented. Acts of abuse and insult might be positive for their doers only for those rare beings who have reached a high level of excellence in means.

These conclusions have similar implications to those of the last chapter, from a different direction. Again we see that common interpretations of Mahāyāna ethics miss a crucial connection in the bodhisattva's reasons for his behaviour, as Śāntideva describes it — this time pertaining to harm rather than benefit. The bodhisattva is compassionate and altruistic, and he prevents people from being attacked and wronged — but he does not do this because these attacks and wrongs actually harm them, as is often thought, just as he does not provide them with material goods because the goods actually benefit them. And again, political institutions take a highly limited role in Śāntideva's thought as a consequence. There is perhaps more reason for the bodhisattva to deal in politics on grounds of wrongdoing than of material harm — fighting the wrongs of individual politicians as one would

anyone else. But again, one's concern remains with individuals and not with political institutions.

VI. Methods of application

In the previous two chapters I showed how, if we examine the implications of Śāntideva's idea of ethical revaluation, what we learn can deepen our understanding not only of his work but possibly even of Mahāyāna ethics in general. But I think that the implications of Śāntideva's ethical revaluation are broader still — enough so that they can challenge contemporary non-Buddhist understandings of ethics.

I intend to show in particular that Śāntideva's ideas effectively refute a number of contemporary claims made against ethical revaluation. In so doing, I aim to make ethical revaluation into what William James (1897) refers to as a "live hypothesis" — that is, "one which appeals as a real possibility to him to whom it is proposed." The idea, I argue, is radical but not ridiculous. I do not mean, in other words, to make the strong claim that we should indeed fully accept it. I do not aim to convince my readers of this strong claim, because I do not accept it myself. The weaker claim I make here, rather, is that the idea is powerful enough to be worthy of our serious philosophical consideration — that it is difficult to rule out, even though accepting it and living up to it would indeed make for a drastic change in our thoughts and

ways of living.

The substance of my arguments on this score occurs in the next (seventh) chapter. But in order for those arguments to carry the weight that I intend them to, a number of preliminaries are in order. In this chapter I will explain the methods I have chosen to make this contemporary application viable, especially methods in cross-cultural comparison. I will examine those methods in the context of other approaches in comparative religious ethics, in order to highlight the innovations I make.

The contemporary audience

I have used the pronoun "we" several times already, and the usage is significant and deserves examination. Śāntideva's own project attempts to expound a universal ethical truth. That one should generate the awakening mind, that monasticism is better than householding, that altruism is better than egoism and that nonattachment and patient endurance are worthy ideals — nowhere does he hold these claims to be bound by cultural context. The bodhisattva path is the best path that one can follow, in all times and places. My project does not aim as high as his. I do not reject the idea of

universal ethical truths, but I think that they are very difficult to establish, and so in this project I set myself a more modest goal. Specifically, I deliberately aim the project at a contemporary audience, at an "us" with relatively narrow bounds, considering how much of Śāntideva's ethical revaluation can make sense to us given the historically specific points from which we are likely to start.

Who then are "we"? For the purposes of this project, we are English-speaking academics shaped in the context of the 21st- (or even late-20th-) century West[188], concerned with questions of ethics (whether within or outside the academic study of religion. Obviously, this "we" is far from a monolithic body, but nevertheless our context frequently produces certain strongly held

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188. "West" or "Western" is a shorthand for Europe and those cultures which are descended largely from European influences, especially those of the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. This shorthand is clearly inaccurate, since even assuming the traditional arbitrary representation of the globe on a map with Europe at the centre, some of these cultures would be located well to the east. However, the most common alternative term, "Euro-American," is considerably worse. It is at least as inaccurate, since several of these cultures are neither American nor European (at least, no more European than Americans are). It has the additional disadvantages of being less familiar and of sounding even more restrictive than it is supposed to be; "Euro-American" can mean "American of European descent," rather than "European or American."

background assumptions that would not be so central in other contexts, such as Śāntideva's own. To name the most pertinent example here, we tend to be highly skeptical of ideas of ethical revaluation like Śāntideva's, especially when they lead to a rejection of political participation, as Śāntideva's ideas generally seem to. The popularity of Engaged Buddhism among Western Buddhists (including Western academic Buddhists) is a testament to this point.

Likewise, we are typically skeptical of supernatural claims. By "supernatural" I mean claims for causal processes that are implausible given the findings of natural-scientific research (such as the rays that emanate from a bodhisattva's body and make the blind see). In a 2000 debate over the extent to which the study of religion should be "naturalistic," even David Ray Griffin (2000, 104-5, 108-9, 111), who accepts a considerably narrower version of naturalism than his opponents, nevertheless rejects supernaturalism in this sense, claiming such a rejection is "necessary for participation in academic, including scientific, conversations."

I am not sure that I would go even as far as Griffin — I think that it is worth keeping an open mind toward the possibility of supernatural phenomena. But in Śāntideva's case, there is a crucial difference between

nonattachment and supernaturalism — namely that he *argues* for the former and not the latter. Especially, we cannot assume the existence of rebirth the way he does. Some Buddhist thinkers, like Dharmakīrti (see Taber 2003), have specifically argued for the existence of rebirth; but to assess those arguments would be a separate project. We do not need to go as far as John Searle (1992, 90-1) in summarily dismissing the idea of an afterlife, claiming that "we cannot take such opinions seriously." We might be willing to accept, for example, that we know so little about what consciousness is that we cannot say with confidence what happens to it with the death of the body. But it is a long leap from such an agnosticism to Śāntideva's claims about bad people spending eons in the hells. Arguments premised on good and bad rebirths, then, cannot convince us unless we already have other, highly unusual, reasons to accept them.[189] It is not merely that Śāntideva's beliefs are at odds with ours; it is more fundamentally that he provides us with no reason to adjust our beliefs to fit his — whereas he does so for his

189. For example, in an online conference held by the *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, Gregory Wonderwheel claimed that rebirth "is an observation that arises in deep meditation states." (Email communication, 20 October 2005) I would hazard a guess, however, that the proportion of my readers who have made such an observation is a small minority at best.

nonattachment and his rejection of politics.

A contemporary foil: Martha Nussbaum

In order to show how Śāntideva's thought applies to us, I will juxtapose it in the next chapter against the arguments of a particular contemporary thinker, who articulates many of the objections that we might have to Śāntideva's idea of ethical revaluation — objections that could be said to represent and defend our common sense. I have selected a single thinker as a foil for Śāntideva as a way to articulate contemporary objections to his view more clearly, by spelling out a set of objections that have already been made to views very much like his. I intend in this way to attain a precision and depth that would be more difficult if I compared Śāntideva to "us" in general.

To this end I have aimed to select a highly influential contemporary thinker who articulates objections to ethical revaluation at great length and with a wide variety of arguments. Such a thinker is Martha Nussbaum. No single thinker can be held to be representative of contemporary thought in general, of course, any more than a single Buddhist thinker can accurately represent all of Buddhist tradition. But Nussbaum's wide influence suggests,

at least, that her views are not especially eccentric. In religious ethics, her ideas have been discussed with reference to Christian (Adams 1999), Jewish (Kavka 2003) and Buddhist (Vanden Eynde 2004) perspectives; in philosophical ethics, to give a sampling of the interest in her work, symposia devoted specifically to her work and its implications appeared in the October 1998 issue of *Metaphilosophy*, the October 2000 issue of *Ethics*, the March 2004 issue of *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* and the December 2006 issue of the *Journal of Ethics*. Beyond religious and philosophical ethics, her ethical work has been cited in fields ranging from education (Waghid 2004) to law (Sigler 2000). It would seem fair to say, then, that her work is widely held as a live option among contemporary ethical thinkers.

Nussbaum's significance to my project is not merely that she is influential or representative, but that she argues far more explicitly than most against a form of ethical revaluation very close to Śāntideva's. For Nussbaum, our well-being depends on things — relationships, political participation, food, clothing, health — that we take to be our own, and yet are easily taken away from us. These "external goods" have great and often intrinsic worth in a good human life; we lose far too much if we try to deny their value. In the next chapter I will attempt to demonstrate two major

claims: first, that Nussbaum, in her writings on external goods, is trying to argue against an idea very similar to Śāntideva's ethical revaluation; and second, that those arguments are not sufficient reason for us to reject Śāntideva's idea.

The idea that external goods have significant worth is relatively commonsensical to us, enough so to be frequently assumed by other thinkers without argument. Some contemporary thinkers assume an even stronger position: that, other things being equal, having more external goods is always a good thing. John Rawls, for example, said in *A Theory of Justice*:

> Regardless of what an individual's rational plans are in detail, it is assumed that there are various things which he would prefer more of than less. With more of these goods men can generally be assured of greater success in carrying out their intentions and advancing their ends, whatever these ends may be. The primary social goods, to give them in broad categories, are rights, liberties, and opportunities, and income and wealth. (Rawls 1999, 79)

While Rawls admitted the existence of goods other than these "primary goods," he nevertheless took it as unproblematic that having more of these goods (which are external in Nussbaum's sense) is better. His later work is somewhat more equivocal on this point. In *Political Liberalism* he claims: "Even if in most cases the index [of primary goods] does not approximate very

accurately what many people most want and value as judged by their comprehensive views, primary goods will surely be regarded by all, or nearly all, as highly valuable in pursuing those views." (Rawls 1995, 188-9) He is not necessarily assuming here that more is better; but he *is* assuming the value and worth of primary goods. Both his early and late writings remain influential, and it remains relatively rare to find works of contemporary ethics that question the value of external goods.

Nussbaum, by contrast, takes attacks on external goods seriously.[190] She sets her position against a set of ideals set forth (she claims) primarily by the Greek and Roman Stoics, but also to some extent by others such as Plato. We will see in the next chapter that while Śāntideva's views are not the same as those that Nussbaum criticizes, they are close enough that his arguments may call hers into question.

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190. Contemporary thinkers also consider related issues in discussions of "moral luck" (e.g. Statman 1993; Card 1996). But those discussions tend to have a more limited range of concerns than Nussbaum's — they concern the effect of "external goods" on our ability to be good people in a specifically "moral" sense, rather than on our ability to live good lives as a whole. Such discussions could possibly produce a fruitful dialogue with Śāntideva on one of the particular questions I discuss below (the material and institutional conditions for virtue), but they are not as helpful as Nussbaum's work in a broader sense.

For the purposes of my chapter, Nussbaum's most relevant writings are those that critique classical Greek and Roman philosophers, especially Plato and the Roman Stoics Seneca and Marcus Aurelius. It is in these writings that she makes arguments against a view like Śāntideva's, and it is these writings to which I think Śāntideva's views offer important replies and refutations. Because her ideas are addressed to the views of classical Greek and Roman thinkers, I will refer to these thinkers several times in the next chapter, and I will treat them according to Nussbaum's own interpretations. The Marcus Aurelius addressed there is Marcus as he appears in Nussbaum's work; the Aristotle is Nussbaum's Aristotle. This is not to argue that her interpretations are correct; I leave such an argument (or its refutation) up to those better versed in Greek and Roman philosophy than I am. I think an attempt to bring these philosophers themselves directly into the dialogue on the chapter's questions would be interesting and valuable; but the chapter does not make this attempt. There is a great deal to say without them.

I should specify also that I am dealing with Nussbaum's views primarily as an ethical thinker, not a political thinker. Concerns about good government and law have occupied an increasing role in her more recent thought (Nussbaum 2004; Nussbaum 2006; Nussbaum 2007); I do not address

this work here. Nussbaum explicitly separates her ethical thought from her political thought, though she notes a connection:

> one of the tenets of my ethical doctrine is the obligation to support something like the political doctrine. That, however, is only one of the tenets of my ethical view, which also contains statements about love of family and locality that are not part of the political doctrine. (Nussbaum n.d., 4)

The distinction has significant political implications. An important component of Nussbaum's liberal political doctrine is religious freedom, so that for her it is important that people be able to *choose* a life, like Śāntideva's monasticism, that aims at nonattachment. Nevertheless, her defences of external goods make it clear that, according to her comprehensive ethical doctrine, such a choice is a *bad* choice for human beings to make, one that makes their lives poorer. In my next chapter, I will not be discussing or critiquing the content of the political doctrine itself. I will, however, critique the parts of the ethical doctrine that relate to the political doctrine — especially the tenet she mentions, that one is obligated to support something like the political doctrine.

Classes of argument

As mentioned, it is not Śāntideva's worldview as a whole that I wish to bring into the contemporary context, but rather the idea of ethical revaluation and his arguments for it. I do not bring in all of his arguments, either. I focus primarily on those arguments that rest on mental states. I also examine some derivative arguments — arguments that assume one has already accepted some aspects of the bodhisattva path, such as compassion, when those elements seem relatively uncontroversial in the context of the dialogue with Nussbaum. I do not, however, bring in those arguments that rest on karma or on metaphysical insight.

I explained above that a present audience is unlikely to accept arguments on supernatural premises, and that, more importantly, Śāntideva does not argue for such premises. Arguments that rest on rebirth, therefore, will likely not be compelling to a contemporary audience; if we hear that anger will send us to the hells in the next life, it is not going to provide us with strong reason to adopt such a worldview.

To reject supernaturalism does not necessarily require rejecting the concept of karma entirely. Dale Wright (2004) makes a thoughtful case for a "naturalized" concept of karma, on the grounds of eudaimonistic virtue ethics.

To perform good actions shapes one's character in ways that makes one's life better and more flourishing in the future, and to perform bad actions shapes one in ways that harms one's future — in this life, without reference to the next. Wright refers to very few Buddhist texts in developing this approach, but I think that one could fruitfully use Śāntideva's ideas to support it. In the discussion of karma in my second chapter, I noted how much good karma (*puṇya*) shares with the Greek conceptions of flourishing (*eudaimonia*) that underlie Wright's approach to karma. Let me be clear: it is not that Śāntideva *agrees* with Wright. There is no doubt that Śāntideva himself believes in rebirth and the supernatural; references to these are obvious even to the most casual reader of his work. I mean to say only that if one wishes to apply Śāntideva's arguments in ways that involve karma but not rebirth, his texts do contain resources that aid one in developing such an application.

I do not think that it is *necessary* to naturalize karma in this way in order to apply Śāntideva in the way that I do in this chapter. The arguments that I refer to in the next chapter do not depend on karma; I think there is sufficient ground to take Śāntideva's ideals seriously without relying on it. Nevertheless, Śāntideva's concept of karma is such that we would not necessarily need to discard arguments that rely on it. In practice, I find that

on inspection, most such arguments in fact end up relying on mental states or on rebirth, and so I have not relied on a naturalized concept of karma in what follows. The possibility of doing so would be there in principle, however.

I also do not rely here on Śāntideva's metaphysical claims.[191] Unlike the supernatural claims, Śāntideva clearly makes arguments here; that is not my reason for excluding them. Rather, my reason for excluding these claims rests on the nature of the dialogue I am attempting. Nussbaum clearly *has* a metaphysics, and one at odds with Śāntideva's, as we may note when she lists recognition of "individual separateness" as a criterion for accepting an ethical position (Nussbaum 2001b, 480). But she rarely makes arguments for a particular metaphysics in her work; the argument for recognition of separateness is one paragraph long. On metaphysical issues, this particular dialogue is difficult to sustain. Moreover, to bring them in would significantly change the focus of this dissertation, since Śāntideva's metaphysical views are complex and would require considerably more space than I have been able

191. The "metaphysical" is sometimes equated with the "supernatural," since the latter is effectively a Latin translation of the former. I use the two terms in completely different senses, however. "Supernatural" causal connections, as discussed above, do not necessarily have anything to do with "metaphysical" claims as I defined them in my second chapter, claims about the nature of reality.

to devote to them.

The practice I have just outlined, of deemphasizing supernatural and metaphysical arguments, bears some resemblance to Lee Yearley's (1990, 175-82) attempt to deemphasize "secondary theory" at in favour of "practical theory." Yearley attempts to build on Robin Horton's (1997, 11) distinction between primary theory — relatively basic explanations of "the world of people, animals, sticks, stones, rocks, rivers, and so on," which are "experienced as directly given" — and secondary theory, which "comes in to make up for the cognitive deficiencies of its primary counterpart" in a way that "results in the picture of a 'hidden' world underpinning the 'given' world of everyday." In this sense the explanations of modern natural science are as "secondary" as are accounts of karma or of angels.

Yearley attempts to insert a third category of "practical theory," which he considers the ground of more fruitful comparisons: "With their secondary theories we may see only dissimilarities or real but thin resemblances. With their practical theories, however, we can probe real and illuminating relationships." (Yearley 1990, 181) I find Yearley's category of "practical theory" somewhat vague. He often suggests that it primarily "generates a form of explanation, prediction and control" (Yearley 1990, 178) with respect

to socially formed practices; but it is not clear how much "practical theory" is merely about explanation, prediction and control (as the theories of natural science claim to be) and how much of it offers normative accounts of good and bad, accounts which provide prediction and control with their purpose.

Nor is it clear to me that the separation of practical from secondary theory is the most helpful way to proceed with comparison in the general case. While it seems to me that on Yearley's framework my comparison is mostly at the level of "practical theory," and while I explicitly separate out two elements (the metaphysical and the supernatural) that would constitute "secondary theory," I do not rely on his distinction as an organizing concept. I have instead organized the terms of my comparison around classes of *argument*, ways in which Śāntideva attempts to convince, and focus on those which will convince a contemporary readership rather than those that will not. This is a pragmatic way of helping to ensure that our encounter with Śāntideva's ideas of ethical revaluation will be a valuable one; it is derived from the purposes of my comparison, the particular characteristics of Śāntideva's lines of argument, and their plausibility in our own context. Such a separation would not necessarily be the most appropriate way to examine any other thinker.

Normative and comparative

I intend my work in the next chapter to illustrate a new way of doing religious ethics, one that crosses significant methodological divides within the subfield: in particular, the divide between normative and comparative ethics. Tracing the history of religious ethics as a subfield of the study of religion, James Gustafson (1998) notes that in the mid-20th century, the subfield had consisted almost entirely of normative Christian ethics, but that as the century progressed it came to incorporate other traditions and to move "from normative ethics to descriptive, comparative, and analytical ethics." The two changes were closely linked — in my view, too much so. Reading issues of the *Journal of Religious Ethics* (JRE) over the past few decades, one will notice two major kinds of articles: articles exploring normative questions from a Christian perspective, and articles exploring other traditions from a largely descriptive and comparative approach. One may note, for example, Ronald Green's (Green 1998, 229) list of eight ethical thinkers who have been the subject of JRE symposia on their contemporary relevance. Every single one of the eight is a Christian thinker, and Green does not comment on this fact, even though he is enthusiastic about the presence of comparative reflection on other traditions.

Indeed, the idea that work in Buddhist ethics cannot be normative seems almost a given for many scholars. When Damien Keown (2001, 5-6) argues that the study of Buddhist ethics needs to move "beyond simple descriptive ethics," for example, he means that it must incorporate discussion of meta-ethics — but still in a descriptive way, describing Buddhist meta-ethics with no mention of normative application.[192] In a more striking way, David Chappell's discussion of the Upāsakaśīla Sūtra, in the JRE, concludes by saying the sūtra's values and worldviews "now need to be measured by trying to apply them as a guide for various ethical decisions. But perhaps this is a task for Buddhists rather than scholars." (Chappell 1996, 371) This closing quote of Chappell's seems to make not only a strangely sharp dichotomy between Buddhists and scholars — one which the scholars writing in Jackson and Makransky 2000 would surely question — but also a ready assumption that it is not the scholar's job to apply ethical ideas. I find it astonishing that such an assumption can be found in a scholarly journal devoted to *ethics*, and full of Christian constructive work in ethics to boot. If

192. Moreover, he does not seem to avoid normative ethics on the grounds of his later claim that Buddhism *has* no normative ethics (see my second chapter), since he was not making and had not made that claim in the book in question.

constructive work in ethics is not a task for scholars, this fact would surely come as news to philosophers; if work applying the ideals of a tradition is not a task for scholars, it would surely come as news to the Christian ethicists writing in the very same journal as Chappell.

With some exceptions, then (e.g. Ivanhoe 1991), religious ethicists have tended to think *with* Christianity, but only think *about* other traditions. I intend to help fill this gap, by doing constructive, normative work in ethics that refers to and learns from a non-Christian tradition, thinking with Śāntideva and not merely about him.

Since it addresses two different thinkers across cultures, this work is necessarily comparative. Unlike much work in the field of comparative religious ethics, however, my work treats comparison as a mere methodological tool for application and dialogue, not as a goal in itself. I find that much work in comparative ethics is hampered by the latter approach. Aaron Stalnaker's (2006) otherwise careful study exemplifies this problem, in my mind. Stalnaker notes at least three rationales for comparison in ethics: it can "[bring] to consciousness the full range of consequences of common contemporary ways of framing ethical issues, and thus [call] them into question" (Stalnaker 2006, 2); it can bring "comprehensive visions of the good"

out of the margins and into the centre of ethical reflection (Stalnaker 2006, 19); and it can “develop virtue ethics in a fruitful new direction” and “[shed] much light on the moral psychology of character development.”

I agree with Stalnaker that these three are all potential benefits of certain kinds of cross-cultural studies in ethics, studies that will necessarily employ comparisons as a tool. I also salute him for specifying so clearly the benefits he hopes to produce with his work; in a number of contemporary comparative projects, the purposes are far harder to discern. Yet I cannot see how Stalnaker’s own project of comparing Augustine and Xunzi fulfills *any* of these three rationales — at least, any more so than would a project taking either Augustine or Xunzi by himself. For a comparison to be helpful in calling contemporary ethical frames into question, it seems to me, requires that one of the objects of comparison itself be contemporary, so that *it* can be called into question.[193] Similarly, in order for comprehensive conceptions of the good to be made more central to contemporary normative ethical

193. This is not to say that such comparison must be done entirely between two thinkers. One could imagine, for example, a fruitful study that took *three* objects of comparison — say Augustine, Xunzi, and a representative of contemporary thought. But without an explicit and detailed discussion of such a third term, it is unclear how Stalnaker’s study fulfills this goal any better than would a study of Augustine or Xunzi alone.

discourse, they need to be explicitly brought into dialogue with that very discourse. And to develop new directions for virtue ethics and moral psychology with one's cross-cultural study, one must engage directly with the old directions, bring them explicitly into dialogue with the foreign traditions one is studying.

For a comparison to fulfill any of these stated objectives, in short, it would seem to me that at least one of the objects of comparison *must* be a live option, a live hypothesis, in contemporary discourse.[194] Stalnaker's project could perhaps succeed in at least some of the ways he proposes if he were to bring out more explicitly the ways in which contemporary thinkers situate themselves as Augustinians (e.g. Griffiths 2004) — or, for that matter, if he were to situate *himself* as an Augustinian Christian. Then his project, rather than being primarily a more-or-less symmetrical comparison of Augustine

194. Thomas A. Lewis's (2005) article on Hegel and Xunzi is interesting on this point. Lewis begins by critically examining Hegel's methods in comparative philosophical reflection, and drawing methodological lessons from Hegel's work. This approach appears as a promising way of making Hegel a live option for Lewis's own work. The benefits of this approach begin to seem less clear, however, once he turns to making a direct comparison, between Hegel and Xunzi. This comparison largely ends up as a list of similarities and differences between the two thinkers, and it is not altogether clear what the reader gains by having examined this list.

and Xunzi, would look more like an exploration of what Xunzi has to say to Augustinians, thus contributing directly to the existing Augustinian stream of contemporary ethical discourse.

I intend this dissertation to help fulfill some of the noble objectives that Stalnaker sets out, in a way that is more explicitly targeted to fulfilling them than Stalnaker's own work is. There are two crucial features of my project which help it fulfill those objectives, thereby providing it with an end beyond comparison *per se*. First, I have found it crucial to choose as a comparisand an influential contemporary thinker like Nussbaum, whose views are "live" in James's sense. Second, the comparison needs to identify particular *kinds* of similarities and differences. The similarities I establish are primarily *similarities of concern* — I identify ways in which Nussbaum's concerns and concepts are close enough to Śāntideva's that they can meaningfully be said to be talking about the same thing.[195] But the

195. When I say that I am looking for similarities of concern, I do not mean to imply that the thinkers' concerns are the same, or to preclude the kind of attention to nuance and detail that Yearley (Yearley 1990, 4-6) describes as finding "similarities within differences" and "differences within similarities." I have tried to exercise a similar kind of attention in my discussion of the thinkers' concerns; my difference from Yearley on this score is that I treat such work as a first step, an essential tool for the larger project

similarities of concern are there as a grounding for the *differences of opinion* — ways in which the two thinkers take very different positions on the same issues.

By focusing on these two features, I intend to foreground the way in which Śāntideva's views call contemporary ethical claims — claims like Nussbaum's — into question, and show more directly the new directions in which he can help virtue ethics develop by highlighting the ways in which these new directions differ from the old. Through these two features, I intend my comparisons as tools for bringing Śāntideva's ideals into contemporary thought, which is the main aim of the project in this chapter and the next. This seems to me a far more effective way to live up to any of the promises that Stalnaker identifies in comparative work.

I do generally agree with Stalnaker, however, when he speaks of the benefits of one-on-one comparison between individual thinkers:

> By focusing in depth on only a few figures, in cultures and traditions that an author knows well, it becomes possible to approximate the level of contextualization in capable intellectual history. Most important, tightness of focus, on the basis of real scholarly expertise in the relevant languages, cultures and traditions, allows a level of precision in both treatment and

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of application and dialogue.

> comparative analysis that is otherwise unattainable. Moreover, generalizations about single thinkers, especially if they have systematic tendencies, are much more defensible, and can be more effectively qualified as necessary, than generalizations about whole religions or traditions. If the figures to be compared are to be taken seriously as thinkers, with theoretical positions and vocabulary that are worthy of careful attention, then the model of comparing two thinkers in depth around a particular theme of interest will be hard to surpass. (Stalnaker 2006, 14-15)

This quote capably sums up my own reasons for choosing two single thinkers for dialogue rather than aiming for a broader scope (such as trying to juxtapose Śāntideva with contemporary thought at a level more general than Nussbaum's, moving from thinker to thinker). The dialogue can do more justice in this way to both thinkers' concerns; it can capture more detail and nuance. But it is important, in my mind, that at least one of those thinkers be chosen as a representative of something larger, as Nussbaum here is taken as representing contemporary Western thought. Obviously, there are plenty of contemporary thinkers who disagree with Nussbaum; but her ideas are influential enough that I think they can be said to represent something more than her own thoughts alone, and give Śāntideva a way of speaking to at least some of "us."

I do not mean to suggest here that my comparative method —

identifying similarities of concern and differences of opinion with a “live” contemporary thinker — is the only viable mode whatsoever for comparative ethics. Many other fruitful kinds of comparison are possible in studying ethics. One might think, just for example, of some of the very different kinds of comparison discussed by Charles Tilly (Tilly 1984), where comparison allows one to set a particular historical phenomenon in the context of larger historical systems in which it belongs (as much of Frank Reynolds’s work does in ethics), or establish law-like principles on which such historical phenomena can happen (as Collins 1998 tries to do with ethical and other philosophies). I am saying, however, that given the kind of goals that Stalnaker sets out, of calling contemporary ethical frames into question, bringing comprehensive visions of the good into the centre of ethical reflection and developing new directions for virtue ethics and moral psychology, a methodology like mine is likely to be more fruitful than one like his, in which neither comparisand is a live option and the similarities are not selected with an eye to highlighting differences of opinion. To the extent that one’s goals in comparing traditions or thinkers are different, different methods of comparison will also be called for.

Constructive work beyond "formalism"

I will now explore how my work fits into the methodological debates current in the subfield of comparative religious ethics. This subfield is typically taken, by many of its practitioners, to be divided into two (variously described) methodological approaches. On one side is a group variously referred to as the "formalists" (Lovin and Reynolds 1985, 12-15; Stalnaker 2006, 16), "ethicists" (Sizemore 1990, 87) or "comparative ethicists" (Clayton 2006, 7-9); on the other are the "empiricists" (Lovin and Reynolds 1985, 18-20), "holists" (Stalnaker 2006, 16; Clayton 2006, 7-9) or "historians" (Sizemore 1990, 87). The former approach, of which Ronald Green's work (Green 1978; Green 1988) is usually taken as an exemplar, is heavily influenced by Kant's thought; it looks for universal concerns in ethics, and sees them as taking place in a realm of ethical or religious reasoning concerned above all with values but set apart from descriptive beliefs about the world. The latter, with which Lovin and Reynolds (1985, 18-20) identify themselves, looks at ethical traditions in a more naturalistic way, seeing "fact" and "value" together and more skeptical about the possibility of universals. The former are more likely to see their project as moral philosophy, the latter as historical anthropology.

My main concerns in this chapter and the next are explicitly ethical or philosophical, not historical or anthropological. For that reason I am somewhat sympathetic to the "formalists," and one might expect me to situate my project with them. However, I find the "empiricists" are much more able than the formalists to provide adequate descriptions of the traditions under study, and I am far more sympathetic to their naturalist epistemology of ethics. As a result, even though I aim to produce constructive work in ethics, I believe I remain broadly within an empiricist approach, at least as it is articulated by Lovin and Reynolds (1985).

I agree with Lovin and Reynolds (1985, 14) that a formalist approach like Green's, beginning with a description of a complex and detailed structure of "religious reason" and then finding it in particular cases of existing traditions, "purchases comparative scope at the price of descriptive adequacy." I think that Green's Kantian approach to religion, arguing for supernatural belief as a logically necessary consequence of an ethical view (seeing ethics itself in a Kantian sense), has some promise of a purely normative account of what human beings *should* think — which is what Kant's own account was. But it is difficult to see this view as adequately characterizing the beliefs of existing traditions; moreover, even if it were true, it would also seem to

deprive the cross-cultural study of ethics of some of its purpose. For if one already knows that the same necessary "deep structure" must be found in the "religious reason" of all traditions, knowing one tradition alone would seem to be an entirely adequate basis for constructive reflection. In other traditions, one will merely find confirmation of what one already knows, rather than being challenged by difficult but rationally argued alternative beliefs.

Still, constructive approaches like mine are often seen as necessarily closer to the "formalist" side. This is because they do necessarily involve attempting to reason cross-culturally, and to do so requires some specification of a common structure of reason (especially practical reason) that can be applied across the boundaries of traditions. It is for this reason that I specify the thin conception of rationality described in chapter 2, as respect for the normative force of non-contradiction. I submit that this conception crosses the boundaries of the traditions at issue, for Śāntideva and Nussbaum both appear to respect this force. I discussed Śāntideva's respect for it in chapter 2. Nussbaum likewise tries to bring out contradictions in her opponents' arguments (as we will see in the next chapter), and moreover she gives a detailed account of Aristotle's respect for non-contradiction that she seems to agree with as well (Nussbaum 2001a, 252-4). One could perhaps argue that

there are major thinkers or traditions that do not share this respect; but even if that were so, it would not be significant for the present project, where those traditions are not among the objects of comparison.

So I indeed present what could in some sense be called a "common structure of practical reason" — and Lovin and Reynolds (1985, 28) claim that a hallmark of their "empiricist" approach is "denying that all traditions somehow employ a common structure of practical reason..." So it would seem that here I depart from the "empiricists." Yet Lovin and Reynolds' own approach seems to rely on a specified structure of reason itself — indeed, one that seems to assume more than my own thin structure. For them "the requirement of reason is precisely that no element in the inquiry be immune to revision" (Lovin and Reynolds 1985, 18), which would seem to rule out a great number of foundationalist systems of thought as irrational. Similarly, Alasdair MacIntyre, typically considered a forceful representative of the "empiricist" side, strongly endorses the normative force of non-contradiction. For him, the very problem with the ideas of those who do not situate themselves within a single tradition is that any such person's self "brings to its encounters with the claims of rival traditions a fundamental incoherence which is too disturbing to be admitted to self-conscious awareness except on

the rarest of occasions." (MacIntyre 1988, 398)

If Lovin and Reynolds' denial of a "common structure" of practical reason is to be meaningful, then, it would seem that they must mean by "structure" something more than a thin theory that relies simply on the normative force of non-contradiction. And certainly there are many theories like Green's which posit a much thicker structure, arguing that practical reason implicitly carries with it a large number of necessary substantive conclusions. Other approaches to comparative ethics, such as the "semiformal" theory of Little and Twiss (1978), also specify a much more detailed structure of norms, principles of application, procedures of validation and procedures of vindication. Such attempts seem to be the "common structure" that Lovin and Reynolds are really trying to deny, as a way of "insisting instead on the variety that marks [different traditions'] understandings of the good life..." (Lovin and Reynolds 1985, 28) If even a thin theory like mine is considered to deny that variety, I am not entirely sure how an acceptance of that variety would be possible. So it seems to me that my approach does not violate the "empiricist" denial of a "common structure of practical reason," if such a structure is specified in a viable way.

Moreover, I understand non-contradiction as a commonality within

reason in general, not making a sharp separation between practical reason and any other kind of reason. This point I also share with Lovin and Reynolds — my understanding is "naturalistic" in their sense. That is, unlike Green's approach, "it does not sharply distinguish the ways that people identify and test their moral choices from the ways they identify and test their beliefs about facts." (Lovin and Reynolds 1985, 4).[196]

My approach may look different from Lovin and Reynolds' in the key respect that it draws ideals selectively from Śāntideva's work rather than treating it as a unified whole[197]. Since their work does not attempt to be normative, it differs from mine in this respects in practice, and they are sometimes seen as casting suspicion on approaches like mine. Sizemore in particular characterizes Reynolds as seeing "the diverse forms of behavioral guidance, which the ethicists want to distinguish, as all part of the seamless

196. "Naturalism" in this (descriptive ethical) sense is not related to the other sense of "naturalism" that I have used in this chapter — that is, the rejection of supernatural claims, claims implausible in the light of natural-scientific research.

197. It does the same with Nussbaum's, in a sense, since I am not addressing her political views. But I treat Nussbaum as standing within my own tradition, and selective reading within such a context usually faces fewer objections than selective reading that crosses the boundaries of traditions.

web of a culture's ethos." (Sizemore 1990, 93)

I find this characterization of Sizemore's, however, to be at least potentially misleading, at least if it is taken in a way that would rule out the present project. The characterization of a "seamless web" seems to imply a radical holism of a kind that Reynolds rejects. In addition to stressing the diversity within traditions, he emphasizes that his "holism" does *not* "involve any presumption that the distinctive configuration of elements that constitutes each tradition renders that tradition so unique that conceptual categories cannot be used cross-culturally, or that cross-cultural comparisons are not possible." Rather, it means that "the distinctive configurations of elements that constitute each tradition must be taken very seriously into account when the interpretation of any particular element is being considered." (Reynolds 1990, 60) In accordance with this advice, I have aimed in my previous chapters, especially my second and third chapters, to provide a careful description of what Śāntideva's views look like as a whole and how they fit into the wider context of South Asian and Buddhist tradition. Similarly, I will point out in the next chapter where the deeper roots of Śāntideva's ideals lie, how they lead us to fundamental questions of our highest values in life. This more limited holism remains, it seems to me,

compatible with an “empiricist” epistemology.

The key point, in my view, is that while beliefs about value will generally be inescapably intertwined with *some* descriptive beliefs about the world, they are not necessarily so intertwined with *every* such descriptive belief. I show in the next chapter, for example, how Śāntideva’s ideals depend logically on views about psychological functioning that (at least in principle) could be empirically tested. But to say this is a far cry from saying that his views are meaningless or nonsensical without the existence of celestial bodhisattvas, or other such elements that I do not bring into the comparison.

To carry out the kind of application I wish to do, it seems to me, one needs some degree of selective reading — learning from a past thinker’s ideas in part and not in whole. It can be tempting to view a tradition so holistically that one feels one must learn from the whole thing or from none of it. But if only the whole can be learned from, it would seem to me, we are left with only two options. The first is a wholesale conversion, discarding our worldviews and replacing them with his own. From my own standpoint at least, such an approach would be intellectually dishonest even if it were possible — there are many ways in which I find Śāntideva’s worldview wanting, and I do not have sufficient trust in him to take his word on these. It

also strikes me as highly implausible — even in the most wholehearted conversions from one tradition to another, one is likely to retain many elements of the worldview one had before the conversion. The second option is a detached antiquarian reading of historical thought, where we learn only *about* historical ideas and not *from* them. This approach has its virtues, and I have attempted to present the previous chapters so that they can be read that way, as a matter of merely historical interest, if my readers so choose. But I think that there is value in normative ethical reflection, going beyond historical questions alone; and that Śāntideva's ideas, taken in part and derived from the careful reading of his texts that I have attempted in the previous chapters, can help us pursue it.

It is true, of course, that for any given thinker, different topics of concern will be interrelated in various ways — that there are logical connections between Śāntideva's supernaturalism and his ethics, for example. Thus Stalnaker (2006, 294-5) worries that, in studying Augustine and Xunzi, to isolate "anthropology, general moral theory, and both theory and practices of personal reformation" from "metaphysics, history, recognized authorities... would eviscerate both figures' accounts of human life, robbing them in particular of those considerations that justify the character of the spiritual

exercises they recommend." I will agree that this can be true in many cases, and may well be true in the case of Augustine and Xunzi; some claims depend logically for their justification on other claims, and those other claims cannot be easily discarded. The question, however, is which specific claims require which specific other claims, and how they do so. Not every claim in any given thinker's thought depends on every other claim. If they did so depend on each other, they would form such inseparable wholes that boundaries could never be rationally crossed, that one could never really learn from another tradition's ideas because they would not make any sense without taking along all the ideas of their old context. We would then, it would seem, be stuck in the conceptual relativism that Stalnaker (2006, 5) agrees is a problem. If we are to practise what Stalnaker (following James Bohman) calls a "weak holism" distinct from conceptual relativism, then it would seem that we must agree that certain claims are to some extent extricable from certain parts of their context, so that they can be meaningfully spoken of outside of their original context. In the case of Śāntideva, I have tried to explain the logical connections among his ideas and show how they make sense with each other, and can make sense in our context as well — without necessarily depending on supernatural or even metaphysical ideas. I am not making the claim that

it is *always* fruitful to separate these levels of analysis in this way; merely that it is fruitful in *this* case. It is particularly helpful in this regard that Śāntideva relies on dialectical arguments rather than going back to first principles; he starts with his interlocutors where they are, in ways that frequently do not depend on assuming a whole Buddhist perspective.

For similar reasons, I don't think that it is disrespectful to Śāntideva to pick and choose arguments in this way. He is, after all, an enthusiastic proponent of the doctrine of excellence in means, explaining that bodhisattvas choose whatever forms of speaking are likely to bring them closer to the truth as he sees it (ŚS 322-3); and my chapters are designed to encourage readers to consider the ideals of nonattachment and patient endurance that he advocates, when they might otherwise not have done so. It seems to me that from his perspective these chapters would be, at the very least, better than nothing.

One recent and somewhat similar attempt to learn from a foreign tradition is Mark Siderits's (2003) "fusion philosophy."[198] My approach shares

198. That Siderits also draws on Śāntideva makes his work particularly interesting to me, but the fact is not directly relevant to the methodological discussion at hand.

a number of features in common with Siderits's, but differs in other ways. Siderits's reading of Buddhist tradition, like mine, is avowedly selective; he applies Buddhist thought in part and not in whole. I think that his work, like mine, is largely compatible with Lovin and Reynolds' brand of empiricism, because he is taking Buddhist views as a partner in conversation rather than fitting them into an *a priori* view of their rational structure, and he is also pointing out the connections between ethical views and views about the world. Moreover, Siderits and I both start, in a sense, with preexisting views likely to be held by "us" in the West, and show how Buddhist ideas speak to and in a sense criticize those views.

However, my approach takes a different aim, and perhaps a broader scope, than Siderits's does. Siderits comes to Buddhist tradition with a view to "solving" something that is already recognized, within contemporary English-language thought, as a problem — in his case, the problem of personal identity over time. He identifies himself among "those who see problem-solving as central to philosophy." (Siderits 2003, xi), and he compares the exercise of "fusion philosophy" to borrowing a tool from one's neighbour in order to fix problems in one's own house. (Siderits 2003, xiii)

In this project, however, my aim is not to solve a problem but to create

one — or more precisely, to take a question that has largely been viewed in the contemporary West as unproblematic, and show that it is in fact more of a problem than has hitherto been perceived. Siderits turns to ancient tradition as a way of answering a question that has frequently been asked in contemporary thought; I turn there as a way of raising a question that has *not* frequently been asked. Nussbaum has asked it at more length than most, but does so largely to dismiss the answer that would be at odds with contemporary sensibilities. The proper analogy for my project might be less to borrowing a neighbour's tools, and more to visiting the neighbour's house and finding it designed in unusual ways that one had barely imagined — ways which one has reason to find appealing, and might be tempted to adopt in one's own house, though at a considerable (and not merely financial) cost.

VII. Revaluing external goods

Many of the things we enjoy in life are beyond our complete control. Often our well-being seems to depend on things — property, health, relationships — that we human beings take to be our own, and yet are easily taken away from us. This fact is a central concern of the contemporary classicist and ethicist Martha Nussbaum. For Nussbaum, these "external goods" have great and often intrinsic worth in a good human life; we lose far too much if we try to devalue them. Readers of my previous chapters will already be able to note how far this position diverges from Śāntideva's ethical revaluation.

The preceding chapter explained my methods for applying Śāntideva's thought to the contemporary context. I also explained my reasons for applying Śāntideva's thought to Nussbaum's in the particular ways that I do in this chapter, especially in the terms of recent work in comparative religious ethics. I have now, I hope, established the parameters for a constructive ethical dialogue that brings Śāntideva's ethical revaluation into contemporary thought.

With those parameters made clear, I now want to show exactly what

contemporary contribution Śāntideva's ideas can make. I will first demonstrate that Śāntideva and Nussbaum are both concerned with a similar range of issues — that Nussbaum's concern with "valuing external goods" is very close to the idea in Śāntideva that I have called "ethical revaluation." Crucially, however, while their concerns here are very similar, their opinions diverge dramatically: Nussbaum *rejects* the idea that Śāntideva endorses.

It is this difference of opinion on a similar concern that allows the dialogue to be fruitful — not merely to show differences and similarities, but to reach at least some constructive conclusions. Specifically, I will show how Nussbaum attempts to catch the Greek and Roman Stoics on a number of contradictions in their attempt to revalue external goods, and how the discussions of Śāntideva's thought in chapters 4 and 5 show that these contradictions are only apparent. As a result, I argue, these first grounds are not adequate to refute an ethical revaluation of the kind Śāntideva presents. It is not merely that Śāntideva's position is different from Nussbaum's, but that the existence of his position shows hers to be incorrect. I turn, at the end of the chapter, to examine different grounds that Nussbaum offers to refute ethical revaluation. I argue that these are the more promising grounds, and that future attempts to resolve the question should examine them more

closely.

There is no one single thrust to Nussbaum's arguments for the importance of external goods. Nussbaum raises a number of objections to the Platonic and Stoic view, separable from each other, in various places in her work, and I try to identify each of these. I begin with her claim that revaluing external goods interferes with compassion, which is not itself intended as an argument against Plato or the Stoics, but which could function as an argument against Śāntideva; by showing how Śāntideva combines compassion with revaluing external goods, I demonstrate how he could reply to such an argument, and then also to Nussbaum's argument that revaluing external goods is narcissistic.

I turn then to three arguments that Nussbaum makes about contradictions deriving from the revaluation of external goods: first, that it interferes with benefitting others; second, that it interferes with preventing others' wrongdoing; and third, that it interferes with political action. Based on my discussions in the fourth and fifth chapters, I show that none of these objections pose serious problems for Śaantideva.

I turn finally to two arguments that I think have a greater capacity to be compelling: that the revaluation of external goods ignores the material and

institutional conditions necessary for the development of virtue; and that it prescribes a form of life generally inappropriate to human beings and their natures. I will show that these latter two arguments are considerably more compelling than the previous ones, though not decisive. I will then come to examine the idea of "prevalent ordinary beliefs," which underlies several of these arguments as a methodological point.

Nussbaum on valuing external goods

Nussbaum's work ranges across a notoriously wide range of subjects, from Greek tragedy (Nussbaum 2001a) to international development institutions (Nussbaum 2000). But at least one theme runs through the majority of her work: namely, the importance of *external goods* to a full, flourishing human life. Nussbaum (2001a, 6) defines external goods as "activities and relationships that are, in their nature, especially vulnerable to reversal." Here "externality" is "a metaphorical way of referring to the fact that these elements are not securely controlled by the person's own will," so that bodily health, for example, can also be considered "external" (Nussbaum 2001b, 4n2). The referents of the term "external goods" include "elements

such as friendship, love, political activity, attachments to property or possessions" (Nussbaum 2001a, 6), or "health, wealth, freedom from pain, the good functioning of the bodily faculties" (Nussbaum 1994b, 360).

For Nussbaum, a desire to transcend the importance of external goods is what separates Plato from Aristotle and from Greek tragedians (Nussbaum 2001a). One of the virtues of narrative literature over conceptual analysis as a literary form is that it "has built into it an emphasis on the significance, for human life, of what simply happens, of surprise, of reversal." (Nussbaum 1990, 43) And her "capabilities approach" to human development depends on the idea that certain capabilities, nearly all of which may be taken away from us by forces beyond our control, are "central" to full human functioning (Nussbaum 1998b, 317-18). Even her conversion from Christianity to Reform Judaism was tied up in part with her coming to a view that "real poverty grinds down the human spirit" and that therefore "issues of earthly justice... took priority over the next world" (Nussbaum 2003a).[199]

Nussbaum defends the importance of external goods most explicitly by engaging with arguments made by Plato and the Stoics. Plato, according to

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199. She did later acknowledge, nevertheless, that many Christians strive for poverty alleviation and many Jews do not.

Nussbaum, devalues external goods in the *Protagoras* and *Republic* because they are "unstable," too vulnerable to fickle fortune; the philosopher's contemplation of universals offers us a surer foothold. She does think, however, that Plato modifies his position by the time he writes the *Phaedrus*, allowing human relationships a real significance in the good life. (Nussbaum 2001a, 9) The Stoics take up Plato's earlier position, believing that external goods had no intrinsic value, and perhaps not even instrumental value, to a good human life — though we typically see them as worthy of our desire, their real contribution to our flourishing is effectively neutral. In this respect, the Stoics as Nussbaum describes them are undertaking an *ethical revaluation* of external goods, as I have set out that concept in previous chapters. To them, virtue alone is sufficient for a good life, and it is unaffected by external contingencies (Nussbaum 1994b, 359-60).

The Roman Stoic Seneca takes the point further, arguing that anger is inappropriate in a good life in part because it comes from our losses of external goods that we overvalue. While finding his rejection of anger appealing, Nussbaum ultimately rejects it because it is tied too closely to the Stoic devaluation of external goods (Nussbaum 1994b, 419, 509-10).[200]

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200. In this respect it is worth briefly noting the meaning that the

Nussbaum does not make a blanket defence of the importance of *all* external goods. She agrees with the Stoics' critique of the drives for "wealth, power and luxuries," and sees it as a significant improvement on the "more is always better" approach of *A Theory of Justice* or of utilitarianism (Nussbaum 1994b, 501-2). But against the Stoics, she insists on the importance and value of other external goods: relationships, political participation, and basic needs, the latter closely related to the various "capabilities" on which her political theories focus. (Nussbaum 1998b)

Śāntideva on revaluing external goods

I will show in two ways how Śāntideva challenges Nussbaum's defence of external goods. First, I will recall here those arguments he makes for ethical revaluation that are applicable in the present context. These are

term "stoic" (with a small S) has come to take on in English: "One who practises repression of emotion, indifference to pleasure or pain, and patient endurance," according to the online *Oxford English Dictionary*. While "repression of emotion" hardly characterizes Śāntideva's bodhisattva, "indifference to pleasure or pain" bears some resemblance to his approach; the third item on the list speaks for itself.

specifically the arguments based on mental states, rather than karma or metaphysical insight. To a lesser extent I also include arguments premised on accepting certain ideas that Nussbaum claims to accept and that are also part of the bodhisattva path, notably compassion and altruism. (His various arguments were developed in more detail in my second and third chapters.) Second, I will show how his claims can work as counterarguments to Nussbaum's claims. That second task will take up the bulk of this chapter, but the first task is an important prelude to it.

Recall that for Śāntideva, attachment — a sense that things are ours, including relationships and honour as well as physical property — leaves us unhappy. We can never get enough of the things we take to be ours, even of relationships — however much or little we may have. Eventually, we will lose the things we care about, being burned by grief. Our attachments deprive us of the ability to purify our minds. And Śāntideva goes further by revaluing the things themselves negatively: having them in our possession is itself dangerous, because it *creates* such attachment. Better to go without them as much as possible, in a monastic life.

The case for patient endurance is in some sense the converse of this. Just as caring about seemingly good things makes us unhappy, so a lack of

caring about seemingly bad things makes us happy. Similarly, anger burns us from within and makes our lives miserable, and interferes with our ability to benefit others. If we take painful or frustrating events, and above all others' wrongdoing, as mere opportunities to practise patience for others' benefit — if we revalue them positively — we can be joyful at all times.

Now the concept of "external goods" is not Śāntideva's. Many of the goods that Nussbaum considers "external" (in the sense of being largely beyond one's control) would not be considered so by Śāntideva, because karma implies that ultimately everything that happens to oneself will in some sense have been under one's own control, at some point in the past. Conversely, he tells us at BCA VI.22-32 that everything has causes outside itself, and at VI.47-8 that people's actions are themselves results of others' past karma. These points suggest nothing is fully "internal" either — what one is and does is itself caused by past events.[201] But while he may not be concerned with what is denoted by the literal meaning of the term "external goods," he is very much concerned with its referent, the kind of phenomena that Nussbaum groups within the category. Moreover, there are two points in his

201. See my second and third chapters for longer discussions of karma and its implications.

works where Śāntideva does himself use the term "external" (*bāhya*) to describe things apparently beyond the reach of one's mind and virtue: "By turning away from external action, the mind should not depart from calm."[202] And more famously, he makes an analogy that would likely not seem out of place in the writings of Marcus Aurelius:

> Where will there be leather to cover the whole world? The earth is covered by shoe leather alone. Likewise, external phenomena cannot be restrained by me. I will restrain my own mind. What's it to me whether other things are restrained?[203]

The largest difference between Śāntideva's ideals and the views that Nussbaum criticizes is that for Nussbaum's interlocutors, external goods are largely *neutral* or *indifferent* to one's well-being; it does not matter whether one has them or not.[204] For Śāntideva, they are largely *negative*; they are in most cases harmful. Nevertheless, the two views look quite similar from a contemporary vantage point, because they both reject the *positive* valuation of

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202. *śamāc ca na calec cittaṃ bāhyaceṣṭānivartanāt*, ŚSK 9.

203. *bhūmiṃ chādayituṃ sarvāṃ kutaś carma bhaviṣyati | upānaccarmamātreṇa channā bhavati medinī || bāhyā bhāvā mayā tadvac chakyā vārayituṃ na hi | svacittaṃ vārayiṣyāmi kiṃ mamânyair nivāritaiḥ*, BCA V.13-14.

204. Their position recalls that of Yüan-yü's Sautrāntikas, as discussed in a note in my fifth chapter.

external goods that Nussbaum defends and that we usually take for granted. In other words, they both ethically revalue external goods. Both would argue that winning the lottery or falling in love are not the great and valuable things we would typically take them to be.

Similarly, Nussbaum is strongly concerned with the *absence* of external goods, in the form of material deprivation or of threats to one's health from violent attacks, for example. We might also call these absences "external bads"; for Nussbaum, they have real negative effects on one's flourishing. But these, too, Plato and the Stoics treat as neutral or indifferent; and Śāntideva, as we have seen in previous chapters, treats them in many cases as positive and valuable. And so again Śāntideva effectively shares with Nussbaum's interlocutors an ethical revaluation of external bads, one that Nussbaum herself strongly rejects.

Compassion

Before I begin examining Nussbaum's key arguments against Plato and the Stoics, I want to turn to a claim which she intends as simple description of the Stoics' position, not an argument *per se* — but which, if it were true,

would pose significant problems for Śāntideva. The point has to do with the emotion of compassion. The Stoics reject compassion as they understand it, because they, like Nussbaum, see compassion as requiring that one attribute real and positive significance to external goods. Śāntideva, we have seen, revalues external goods while endorsing compassion — is this a contradiction?

Nussbaum (2001b, 301) effectively defines compassion in a way based on external goods: "compassion is a painful emotion occasioned by the awareness of another person's undeserved misfortune." It is misfortune — events external to oneself, loss, reversal — which necessarily occasions compassion on this view. While the misfortune must be undeserved, the judgement of undesert is somewhat qualified; one may still have compassion for those who suffer harm out of bad character or negligence "so long as one can etiher see the suffering as out of all proportion to the fault *or* view the bad character or negligence as itself the product of forces to some extent excusably beyond the person's control." (Nussbaum 2001b, 312)

The "seriousness" of the misfortune is highly significant for her. She turns to a story told by Seneca, who attacks compassion as she defines it. In this story a Roman aristocrat

> discovers that his shipment of peacock's tongues from Africa has been interrupted. Feeling that his dinner party that evening will be a total disaster in consequence, he weeps bitter tears, and implores his friend Seneca to pity him. Seneca laughs. (Nussbaum 2001b, 309)

Nussbaum (2001b, 372) agrees with Seneca's judgement in this particular case; "compassion should not be given to my Roman aristocrat who misses an evening of peacock's tongues, no matter how much he minds this." She strongly opposes his more general criticism of compassion; she agrees only on this particular case, where the misfortune seems trivial.

Diana Fritz Cates (2003, 336-7) objects to Nussbaum's view that misfortune must be "deserved," even in a qualified sense, for compassion to be appropriate. She claims from her Christian perspective that Jesus exercised compassion toward everyone, even those he judged wrong, and urges an "extravagant" compassion toward those who behave badly. She suggests that "most Buddhists" would agree, citing the example of the Dalai Lama cultivating compassion for the Chinese leadership.

Śāntideva could in some sense be said to harmonize Nussbaum and Cates in this respect: he urges compassion for everyone as Cates does, but on grounds that are in some sense the ones Nussbaum advocates. For as we have seen, in the name of dharmic patience, he uses arguments that imply that *all*

wrongdoing, all "bad character or negligence," is "itself the product of forces... excusably beyond the person's control." The strong determinism he shows in BCA VI.22-33 is explicitly aimed at minimizing the blame one places on others.[205]

Now while Śāntideva indeed does not see innocence as necessary or even significant to occasion compassion, in another respect he goes considerably further from Nussbaum than Cates does. For him, one should feel compassionate toward all suffering, and not merely toward misfortune. He has numerous words that evoke a pain sympathetic to other beings — *dayā*, *karunā*, *kṛpā*. These are certainly "upheavals" in the sense that Nussbaum understands emotions to be; we saw in my second chapter how he compares the pain of these states to having one's body set on fire, as a response to the external condition of another's suffering. To that extent, Śāntideva's compassion is an emotion as Nussbaum understands the concept,

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205. Mark Siderits (2005, 112-13) sees Śāntideva as a compatibilist rather than a determinist, and thus able to blame others for their actions. I disagree with Siderits's interpretation — I think he reads a great deal into BCA VI.31 that is not actually there — but it is not necessary to argue the point here. For Siderits, as far as I can tell, agrees with the broader point I am making here: Śāntideva urges compassion for everyone, irrespective of the wrongs they may have committed.

even in her sense that emotions require some acknowledgement of the importance of external goods (Nussbaum 2001b, 4). For others' well-being, the ending of their suffering, is one external good that Śāntideva does not devalue.[206] In this respect Śāntideva's and Nussbaum's conceptions of compassion are similar.

There is one crucial respect, however, in which the two differ. It is suffering (*duḥkha*) or distress (*vyathā*) that invoke Śāntideva's compassionate emotions, rather than simple misfortune (*anartha*). (See ŚS 156, for example.) That is, it is not the loss of external goods to which a bodhisattva responds; such a loss could even be beneficial. Rather, it is the experience of suffering, whatever its cause.

The notable implication of his approach is that the "seriousness" of misfortune does not matter. Since Seneca's aristocrat is a suffering being, a being in pain, the bodhisattva should respond to his suffering and help him out — perhaps even by finding some peacock's tongues to give to him, if he can. (The gifts of property that Śāntideva describes in ŚS 26-9 are notable for

206. Still, the meditation of equalizing self and other (BCA VIII.90-119) in a sense diminishes others' externality, by including them in a sense within oneself.

their extravagance.) Whether the possession or "enjoyment" (*bhoga*) that one loses is a shipment of luxuries or one's own child, it is worth avoiding attachment precisely because one who is attached will feel suffering when the "enjoyment" is lost. But in either case, the attached one who suffers is a worthy object of compassion.[207]

Because compassion figures so strongly in many Buddhist (especially Mahāyāna) traditions, others have pointed to it as a similarity between Buddhist thought and Nussbaum's; but they miss this crucial difference between the two. Maria vanden Eynde (2004, 49-50) even ends up seeing the Buddhists as Nussbaum's allies in a critique of the Stoics, because Buddhists have a view of existence as interdependent and therefore do not see humans as capable of independence from external goods in the way that the Stoics do. While it is true that *independence* is rarely a central concept in Buddhist accounts, including Śāntideva's, Buddhist critiques of attachment (in which Śāntideva is hardly alone among Buddhists) go completely unmentioned in Vanden Eynde's account. Nussbaum herself mentions the bodhisattva as one

207. Although perhaps one could still laugh at the aristocrat for compassionate reasons — if one thought that the laugh would help stop the self-pity that causes his suffering.

kind of compassionate being (Nussbaum 2001b, 324-5), but does not distinguish how such a being's compassion derives from suffering *per se* rather than from losses or misfortunes.

One could perhaps object that Śāntideva's *kṛpā* or *karuṇā* are not compassion by Nussbaum's lights in that, for her, compassion responds to misfortune *by definition*. This response is correct as far as it goes; but it does not go very far. It would seem to me that it is little more than tautological quibbling over terminology. The most salient features of compassion in Nussbaum's ethical account would seem to be that it is indeed an emotion, and a painful one; that it responds to others' states of being; and above all, that it motivates altruistic action, which Nussbaum (2001b, 335) takes to be one of compassion's most significant features. In terms of any substantive value that the concept is to have for ethical reflection, it seems to me that Śāntideva has sufficiently demonstrated that it is quite possible to feel compassion without attaching value to external goods, beyond a generalized concern for others' well-being. To value the kind of things that the objects of compassion would feel as losses — personal relationships, political freedom, property in any amount — this is not necessary to feel compassion oneself.

Narcissism

I would suggest further that Śāntideva's compassion immunizes him from a first and relatively minor objection of Nussbaum's: that the rejection of external goods involves an unhealthy narcissism.

> We might say that the Stoic objector depicts the person who needs the goods of fortune as a type of pathological narcissist: incapable of respecting others because she is boundlessly needy and wrapped up in her own demands. But... we can turn the criticism around: it is actually the Stoic agent who more closely resembles the pathological narcissist, in her inability to mourn, her rage for control, her unwillingness to allow that other people may make demands that compromise the equanimity of the self. (Nussbaum 2001b, 373)

Whatever the adequacy of this view as a characterization of the Stoics, it would strain credulity to apply it to Śāntideva. Even though he rejects the value of the "goods of fortune," he allows others to make great demands indeed[208], and ones that affect his equanimity at the deepest level: "Just as

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208. I understand "demands" here in a loose sense that gives the greatest strength to Nussbaum's critique: meaning that (as a bodhisattva) one is required or obliged to do things the benefit others, even if one fears for one's equanimity. Even in a more narrow sense, one may well follow their "demands" in the sense of doing the things they request, in order to gratify them and bring them on the path. True, one flees from the "fools" who compromise one's equanimity, but the ultimate goal of doing so is to be a being that can benefit them, thus fulfilling the obligations incumbent on one

there is no happiness anywhere for one whose body is on fire, even through all pleasures, exactly so there is no way to joy (prīti) with respect to the distress of beings for those made of compassion,"[209] i.e. the bodhisattvas. Again, he can combine compassion with a disregard for external goods because this compassion responds to suffering rather than misfortune.

Indeed much of Śāntideva's work is a critique of narcissism, as thoroughgoing as any. Among the most famous passages in his work are the meditations on self and other in BCA VIII: first a consideration of the cognitive argument that there is no reason to privilege oneself over others in any way (BCA VIII.90-119), and then a meditation which exchanges self and other, in which the meditator imagines himself as a slave to others, reviling and subjugating himself, thinking only of their interests irrespective of his (BCA VIII.119-73). Nonattachment, moreover, is essentially the idea that nothing really belongs to oneself; and Śāntideva supports this idea with the ontological claim that the self is a dangerous illusion. It would be strange to

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who has chosen the bodhisattva path.

209. *ādīptakāyasya yathā samantān na sarvakāmair api saumanasyam | sattvavyathāyām api tadvad eva na prītyupāyo 'sti dayāmayānām*, BCA VIII.123.

see him as a narcissistic thinker who refuses to sacrifice himself for others' benefit.

Contradictions in revaluation?

Nussbaum finds three major contradictions in her opponents' views. She claims that given a revaluation of external goods, one cannot consistently provide external goods to others; nor can one prevent others' wrongdoing; nor can one motivate action with respect to political institutions. I will show here how, based on the discussions in my fourth and fifth chapters, we see that none of these are serious problems or contradictions for Śāntideva's form of ethical revaluation.

Providing external goods to others

Nussbaum's first objection to revaluing external goods is that, if one does so, one cannot then motivate benevolence, or benefitting other people. Since both Nussbaum and her Stoic interlocutors encourage benevolence, the charge is serious; moreover, it would be a serious charge against Śāntideva as well, given that benefit to others is central to all his work. "We cannot explain

why benevolence is urgently important," Nussbaum claims, "unless we do ascribe importance to the 'external goods' that the Stoics repudiate." (Nussbaum 2001c, 133) For, she argues:

> morality consists in standing up for external goods (on one's own behalf and that of others) against forces, natural or human, that try to take them away. If things such as food, health, and children do not matter, why would one risk one's life for those things or work to establish a just political order to protect them?[210] Why not, indeed, just stay at home, "each person sluggish in his own fields"? (Nussbaum 1998a, 275)[211]

Nussbaum is thinking of "benevolence" here in a limited sense that depends on external goods; one could easily imagine a Stoic benefitting others by teaching them how to be more virtuous people. Nevertheless, the Stoics as Nussbaum describes them do urge benevolence in the more limited sense as well; how, she argues, can they argue that one should provide external goods to others if those goods don't matter? More broadly, in the Stoic view we seem to view others as "partners in a common project whose terms don't seem to

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210. The question of politics is not the same as benevolence, and I will take it up in a later section.

211. Others have taken up this position following Nussbaum. Christoph Halbig and Andreas Vieth (2001, 54) agree with Nussbaum in the view that the Stoics' "own anthropology and theory of value prevent them from arriving at an adequate position."

matter very much, thus rendering the whole point of living in the world increasingly unclear." (Nussbaum 2003b, 22)

Nussbaum claims that Marcus Aurelius comes closest to solving the problem. She attributes to him the position that a Stoic sage, who does not depend on external goods, can still provide such goods to others who are less developed. They are palliatives, temporarily alleviating the distress of a recipient who cannot (yet) end that distress himself:

> Marcus says that a wise citizen is like a parent whose child has lost a toy and weeps in great distress. Loving the child and having sympathy with its distress, the parent will want to help it get the toy back. The parent, of course, knows that the toy is not really all that important, but she still loves the child and wants to end the child's distress. So she will provide friends and fellow citizens with things such as food, citizenship, and relief of pain. (Nussbaum 1998a, 276)

Nussbaum makes two replies to the approach she sees in Marcus. First, she claims, it is patronizing in its paternalism. "We are not parents of our fellow citizens; we are their equals. We should reject an attitude that sets us above them in a condescending, albeit loving, parental role." Second, it will likely lead us to an impatience that makes motivating benevolence difficult:

> we probably will not be sufficiently motivated by such thoughts when we are dealing with real adults. We are likely to judge that they should behave like adults, not children. We will treat their residual attachments to the "toys" of life as signs of foolishness,

> and we will be impatient with their demands for aid. (Nussbaum 1998a, 276)

There is one key similarity between Nussbaum's own position and the position she criticizes. They both share the assumption that for those who do remain dependent on external goods, possessing such goods is to some extent a real benefit (even if they disagree on the importance of this benefit). Śāntideva's work, I contend, implies a rejection of this assumption.

For Śāntideva, providing external goods can benefit others in ways that have nothing to do with possession of the goods itself being beneficial. As we have seen, for Śāntideva, several kinds of phenomena that Nussbaum identifies as external goods — especially property to which one is attached, and relationships — can in fact make one's life worse. In that sense they may not even really be "goods" at all.

Nussbaum, by contrast, rarely speaks of the possibility that external goods can hurt one's flourishing. She only claims that they would do so in an extreme case: that of the Greek gods, whose lives are so secure that they feel no risk and therefore cannot live to the fullest (Nussbaum 1990, 371-8). She does consider a view that a lack of external goods may be beneficial when she attributes it to Nietzsche (Nussbaum 1994a, 153-4). She divides such lack into two kinds — the "bourgeois vulnerability" that characterized Nietzsche's

own life ("for example, the pains of solitude, loneliness, bad reputation, some ill health"), and "basic vulnerability" such as a lack of food. She argues that this latter kind of lack cannot be beneficial; but she avoids mentioning whether or not she agrees with Nietzsche that "bourgeois vulnerability" could be beneficial (Nussbaum 1994a, 159). She is more interested in the view attributed to the Stoics, that external goods are indifferent — though she rejects that too.

Śāntideva's view does share important elements with that of Nussbaum's Stoics. We saw in the fourth chapter that, as with Nussbaum's Marcus, Śāntideva thinks it can be valuable to provide external goods to others even though their having the goods is unlikely to be beneficial. Śāntideva differs from Marcus, though, in that such a gift is intended to help the recipient grow ethically in the long run, rather than being a temporary palliative. They are beneficial only as a means to take those who are less advanced and help them advance — to make them better disposed to receiving the truth from oneself or from other bodhisattvas. All of this is part of a worldly existence which has a definite purpose: freeing others from the terrible, painful suffering that they experience as very real.

Nussbaum's concern about paternalism would certainly apply to

Śāntideva's position. Śāntideva himself uses metaphors of childhood to describe people who are insufficiently advanced on the bodhisattva path (e.g. BCA VI.93). Ordinary people (*pṛthagjana*s), those who have not entered any Buddhist path — neither bodhisattva nor *śrāvaka* nor *pratyekabuddha* — are frequently described in his work as *bāla*s, a term for "fool" that more literally means "child" (ŚS 60, 90). If anything, Śāntideva is *more* paternalistic than Marcus is, since even the recipient's view that having the gift will alleviate some suffering is one he considers to be false.

Such paternalism is not surprising given Śāntideva's overall approach. Excessive attachment leads one to unnecessary suffering, and involves an inability to see the truth about the dangers of attachment. One who brings on suffering in this way is, for him, worse in a significant way than one who has begun on the virtuous path of the bodhisattva.

But indeed, it would seem that any non-relativist approach to ethics, even Nussbaum's, must allow for the possibility that some people are better, in the sense of being more virtuous or more moral, than others — and in at least that sense, *not* equal. If "condescension" means simply the recognition of a more virtuous person that she is more virtuous than a less virtuous person, it is not clear why such condescension must be a problem. There is certainly a

hierarchy involved, and hierarchies of any sort often feel uncomfortable to contemporary Westerners, steeped in political egalitarianism. But surely it is no threat to that egalitarianism to suppose that some people are better at living than others. Nussbaum herself suggests that Henry James's characters Maggie Verver and Strether can be "paradigmatic of our own responsible conduct," that "they are high but possible and available." (Nussbaum 1990, 164) If we were completely their equals, surely there would be no need to take them as paradigms.

As for Nussbaum's second response to Marcus, on impatience, we have already seen how seriously Śāntideva takes this problem. It is true, he claims, that others' foolish behaviour can frequently make us impatient with them. But that is a reason to be attentive to the impatience within us and to root it out, not to believe them any less foolish; Śāntideva devotes two whole chapters (BCA VI and ŚS X) to the task. It is far from clear psychologically that those who do not see others' pursuits as foolish are any more likely to *be* patient with them. We saw in the third chapter that for Śāntideva, a lack of patience is connected primarily to one's own sense of frustration in losing or failing to attain what one wants, and to a related inability to see things as they really are. He offers us some reason, then, to think that if we value

external goods ourselves we will wind up *less* patient with others. One could perhaps make an empirical study of the connection between paternalism and impatience; such a study is well beyond the scope of this dissertation. But the *prima facie* point is far from enough reason for us to take Nussbaum's side here.

Preventing wrongdoing

The second inconsistency that Nussbaum finds is closely related to the first one, about giving external goods, and is some sense its corollary. There, Nussbaum had asked why one would provide others with goods that are not of real positive significance; here, she asks why one would prevent harms that are not of real negative significance. On this point, Nussbaum anticipates the key element of the reply Śāntideva might make, for Seneca makes a similar reply. But when she addresses Seneca's reply, it is not clear how persuasive her responses are against Śāntideva.

Nussbaum (1994b, 405-13) recounts Seneca's arguments for a life without anger in his *De Ira*, a letter to his older brother Novatus. But she stops with some skepticism. She wonders whether a Stoic could really respond to serious wrongdoing, like that of the Nazis. She recounts how a

young Elie Wiesel, in a Nazi death camp, saw the first Allied liberator enter the camp, a large American officer who cursed and shouted in anger at what he saw. "And the child Wiesel thought, watching him, now humanity has come back. Now, with that anger, humanity has come back." (Nussbaum 1994b, 403) But how, she asks, would a Stoic soldier respond? "If a true Stoic, he will think that none of this matters very much anyhow, that such evils are bound to come about in human life, that it's all what one should expect. This being the case, it's not worth his while to get very upset about it and cry out." (Nussbaum 1994b, 416) It would be difficult for Śāntideva's bodhisattva to serve as a soldier, but if he could, he would effectively be a Stoic in this respect: wrongdoing happens, and anger is a terrible response to it.

However, while *anger* per se is a response Śāntideva abhors, he nevertheless tells us to prevent at least some kinds of wrongdoing. To prevent the wrongs that he considers most serious, the "grave wrongs" (*ānantarya karma*s), he even authorizes a bodhisattva to kill — without anger. But why would he do this? If another's health or relationships or basic needs are not really important, why would one fight to protect someone from losing them?

One answer might be implied in this chapter's earlier sections: that one wishes to gratify the victim, to give the victim an attitude of trust and esteem

toward the bodhisattva. This is, I think, a line of reasoning that Śāntideva *could* take. But he does not develop it. Instead, as we saw in the fifth chapter, he turns to an approach much like Seneca's — one addresses wrongdoing for the *wrongdoer's* benefit, more than the victim's. Seneca makes the analogy to a doctor, trying to cure wrongdoers as one cures a patient. (Nussbaum 1994b, 417) Śāntideva, we saw in the previous chapter, wants to see wrongs prevented for the wrongdoer's sake, preventing the bad psychological consequences that will result. The key difference between the two is that where Seneca speaks primarily of *punishing* wrongdoing to improve the wrongdoer, after the fact, Śāntideva is concerned above all with *preventing* wrongdoing before it happens.

In that respect, Śāntideva is further from Nussbaum than Seneca is. For Nussbaum's first concern is with retributive punishment. She asks of Seneca's doctor, who punishes solely for the wrongdoer's sake:

> Are these, however, the motives we, with Novatus, would wish in a person whose father has been murdered, whose mother has been raped? Don't we want a response that acknowledges the importance of their death and suffering, that wants the punishment of the offender just because it has caused that pain and suffering? Don't we want, in Wiesel's case, the response the American soldier actually had, when he burst out against the horrors he saw, without for a moment thinking of how or whether Hitler's life might be improved, without allowing any

> thought for the reform of Germans to deflect him from the suffering of their victims? (Nussbaum 1994b, 417)

Śāntideva, I think, can rebuff such questions with relative ease. It may well be true that "we" — ordinary people in our pre-reflective beliefs, whether ancient Roman, medieval Indian or modern North American — want to see offenders punished because they have caused pain and suffering. But that is exactly what's wrong with us. We are still mired in a position of blame and of anger, one that leads us to further suffering. If we want the punishment of the offender just because it has caused suffering, we are *wrong*, as surely as we would be if we believed a poison was nutritious and wanted to drink it.[212]

Nussbaum also worries that Seneca's view is callous toward the victim: "Don't we want a response that acknowledges one's own fellow feeling with the sufferer, one's own deep implication in the lives and vulnerabilities of

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212. Śāntideva's writings suggest that he could be more congenial to punishment designed to alleviate future suffering, especially that of the offender himself. He does not actually encourage punishment at any point, however. This is no doubt partially because of his unconcern with political institutions in general (see the next section). Despite that unconcern, he could still say something about punishments in monastic institutions, since he does say some words about how they should be run (ŚS 55-9). But he does not; the only punishments he describes are meted out by karma. It would seem that in his view offenders do not need others to punish them, for they punish themselves within their minds.

others, rather than the somewhat detached and superior response of the Stoic doctor?" (Nussbaum 1994b, 418) To such criticisms, Śāntideva's view provides a powerful reply. His position acknowledges fellow feeling with the sufferer *and* the wrongdoer. One is deeply affected by the suffering of all others; and whatever the severity (or lack thereof) of their wrongdoing, their suffering is caused by their own mental states, but those mental states themselves have causes. The position may be "superior," but it is not "detached"; one burns with compassion. Śāntideva's view here, as I understand it, is similar to that expressed centuries later by Thich Nhat Hanh in his poem "Call Me By My True Names":

> I am the twelve-year-old girl,
> refugee on a small boat,
> who throws herself into the ocean
> after being raped by a sea pirate,
> and I am the pirate, my heart not yet capable
> of seeing and loving. (Nhat Hanh 1987)[213]

Anger, in Śāntideva's view, is corrosive to whoever feels it when a wrong is done — the offender, the victim, the onlooker. "The mind does not get peace, nor enjoy pleasure and happiness, nor find sleep or satisfaction,

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213. However, Śāntideva's approach to this situation may differ from Nhat Hanh's in that it is the young girl's misery that occasions his compassion, not the rape *per se*.

when the dart of anger rests in the heart."[214] Beyond that, it interferes with one's ability to benefit other beings. A compassionate one will root out his own anger, and do the best he can to stop it in others, whether perpetrators or victims of wrongs. Wrongdoing toward others is the product of an anger, or at least a callousness, that causes real suffering; and it risks producing further anger, and therefore further suffering, in the victim.

It seems to me, then, that Śāntideva's view provides an adequate response to Nussbaum's criticisms of Seneca on anger. Like Seneca, he offers reasons why one can prevent wrongdoing without being angry; but he combines this prevention with a thoroughgoing compassion. His view does not satisfy a desire for retributive punishment, but it is difficult to find a reason why it should have to.

Political institutions

We have already observed Nussbaum's concern that one who rejects external goods will not work to establish just political institutions: "If things such as food, health, and children do not matter, why would one risk one's life

214. *manaḥ śamaṃ na gṛhṇāti na prītisukhaṃ aśnute* | *na nidrām na dhṛtim yāti dveśaśalye hṛdi sthite*, BCA VI.3.

for those things *or work to establish a just political order to protect them*?" (Nussbaum 1998a, 275, emphasis added) Here too she finds an inconsistency in the Seneca and Marcus Aurelius, since she portrays them as concerned with political action (Nussbaum 1998a, 276-8). She argues for the importance of politics as follows:

> Instead of thinking of our duties to humanity as, first and foremost, personal duties, we should think that the task of securing the basic goods of life to all (both liberties and opportunities and the material goods) is the task of political institutions. As individuals living under unjust world institutions, we do have personal duties to do what we can to alleviate the misery of the poor. But we should view the first task as the creation of a just institutional structure, and our duties to humanity should thus be conceived, first and foremost, as duties to do whatever we can to bring such structures into being. (Nussbaum 1998a, 281)

On this argument, unlike the previous ones, Nussbaum's claim about the foes of external goods seems accurate when applied to Śāntideva. We saw in my fourth and fifth chapters that he has little time for political institutions — that his advice to kings is to give their kingdoms away, that he actively discourages learning about law and political science, and that even monastic institutions take up a very minor portion of his work.

There are, I think, some resources in Śāntideva's thought that possibly *could* motivate certain kinds of political action. One could imagine

Śāntideva's bodhisattva helping out the adherents of a particular cause, in order to produce esteem in them, just as he might give material goods. (I owe this point to Roger Gottlieb.) The nature of the cause itself, however, would not be especially important in this case. One could also perhaps imagine the bodhisattva aiming to use political institutions to prevent wrongdoing, in order to benefit the potential wrongdoers.

But Śāntideva never takes up these points himself, and indeed seems somewhat suspicious of them. His focus is not on institutions but on individuals. In this, too, he shares a view with Nussbaum's Stoics, one that Nussbaum criticizes:

> they seem to take as their task the production of perfect people, one by one, as if perfect people could in fact be produced without profound changes in material and institutional conditions.... [but] it is only in conjunction with efforts out in the world that the life of thought and desire can really change in any meaningful way. Imagine, for example, what would have happened had the U.S. civil rights movement insisted on ridding people of racist desires and thoughts before moving on to laws and institutions; what would happen if women, rather than demanding equality from laws and institutions, had insisted, first, on perfecting the consciousness and the desires of men. We can conjecture that desire and thought themselves would have made less progress under such a program than in the present state of things, where, frequently, laws and institutions lead the way and thought and desire reluctantly knuckle under — perhaps to be truly changed in future generations. (Nussbaum

1994b, 505)

To the extent that such a critique holds any validity against Śāntideva, however, it would suggest a quite different politics than the one that Nussbaum recommends. The problematic desires and thoughts, in Śāntideva's eyes, go all the way down to what we hold dearest — to our "comprehensive" conceptions of the good. If one were to accept the premises of ethical revaluation and of compassionate benefit, and also to accept that thought and desire are most likely to "reluctantly knuckle under" as a response to changes in laws and institutions, then one would need to endorse a system where the government — at least through moral education, if not through material incentives or outright coercion — attempted to push citizens' thoughts and desires in a comprehensive direction that revalued external goods. Such a direction is quite contrary to the Rawlsian political liberalism that Nussbaum explicitly endorses (Nussbaum 2003b; Nussbaum 2006). Now Śāntideva does not in fact recommend any politics at all, let alone anything like this; but from a perspective like Nussbaum's, that is probably just as well.

Racism and sexism, by contrast, seem to be largely the kind of matters which Śāntideva does not consider to be real problems — at least for their

victims. They may create material deprivation for their victims, or they may create humiliation and insults and abuse and loss of status; but neither of these constitute real problems for the victims, in his eyes. If their victims see things properly, these situations are at worst indifferent for them, at best an opportunity to practise patient endurance, just like poverty or torture. There may be one significant exception to this point, which I will explore in the next section; but by and large, Śāntideva's unconcern with material welfare and status leads him to his unconcern with political institutions.

Śāntideva's relative indifference to political institutions seems to follow from his views of benevolence. Since external goods (including freedom from humiliation and abuse) are not beneficial in themselves, the value of giving them is in the kind of personal transformation it can engender, and this only seems to happen in a direct gift encounter with someone who already knows the problems with external goods and acts accordingly. Śāntideva is no narcissist, and he successfully motivates benevolence, compassion and even the prevention of wrongdoing. But political action is a different thing.

But one must ask, must Śāntideva's unconcern with political institutions be a barrier to his acceptance? Nussbaum's question — "if external goods do not matter, why work to establish a just political order to

accept them?" — functions in her article as something of a *reductio ad absurdum*. But is political unconcern genuinely absurd? It seems like a problem for Seneca and Marcus Aurelius. But Śāntideva does not show the political concern that they show. Could it be that his unconcern is in fact a reasonable option, one that we should consider as a live hypothesis?

I think it is.[215] Nussbaum's main *argument* for political concern is this: "Individuals can to some extent serve humanity in their personal dealings; but justice will never be satisfactorily guaranteed to all until there is a just institutional structure...." (Nussbaum 1998a, 281) I think this claim is correct, as far as it goes; but it begs the question at issue here. To what extent should our goal in fact be to ensure that justice is "satisfactorily guaranteed to all"? Śāntideva urges us to respond not to injustice, but to suffering. Such an ideal follows logically, I have argued, from his revaluation of external goods. To contemporary eyes such an approach seems radical; but it should not seem ridiculous. If we accept that external goods do as much harm as benefit, that view may well lead to an unconcern with justice, but

215. Since the point Śāntideva makes here is extremely controversial, I should point out once again that I am not *endorsing* his views, only claiming that they are more worthy of our serious consideration than arguments like Nussbaum's might otherwise make them appear.

then we can "bite the bullet" and respond: so much for justice. We would instead benefit others solely on grounds of compassion for their suffering.[216] If we are to reject a position like Śāntideva's, it will likely need to be on other grounds. Or at least, we will need to find alternative ways to defend the importance of justice. Nussbaum does begin to suggest one such way, which I will discuss later under the heading of "prevalent ordinary beliefs."

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216. Nussbaum's political discussion of adaptive preferences (Nussbaum 2000, 111-66) notes how people can be apparently happy with unjust conditions, thereby noting a separation of injustice from suffering and arguing that injustice is more important. Her account there critiques utilitarian political philosophies that are based on maximizing happiness and minimizing suffering. What it does not respond to is a position like Śāntideva's that is unconcerned with justice or political institutions of any kind in the first place, except perhaps to the limited extent that monastic institutions can be considered political. Śāntideva's account additionally differs from both Nussbaum's and the utilitarian accounts in that he would likely argue that Nussbaum's examples of adaptive preferences *are* suffering even in their apparent happiness — but that they would suffer similarly even if their situation were just, by Nussbaum's standards or any other.

The serious problems with revaluation

I have so far been relatively dismissive of the criticisms Nussbaum offers of ethical revaluation. If Nussbaum's defence of external goods were limited to the arguments I had cited so far, I would have to say that Śāntideva's arguments were decisive against hers. For it seems to me that the positions outlined in my fourth and fifth chapters are able to reconcile the contradictions that Nussbaum has so far identified in revaluation. But Nussbaum also offers other arguments which are more powerful, if not definitive. On these I think she is far more persuasive — enough that I consider the question unresolved. I think that one can still defend a position like Śāntideva's in the face of these claims, but that it is more difficult to do so than against the claims I have previously discussed. It is because of these questions that I personally stand undecided on the power of the ideals of nonattachment and patient endurance.

Material and institutional conditions for virtue

The first of these stronger points is about the centrality of external goods to the development of virtue, however that virtue might be characterized. Broadly stated: "since functioning matters, and since

functioning has material and institutional necessary conditions, material and institutional conditions matter, and matter enormously." (Nussbaum 1994b, 505) She argues that this claim needs to hold even for the Stoics, who claim that a good or flourishing ("functioning") life is one that depends primarily on virtue. For this virtue cannot spring up *ex nihilo*; it has its causes. On this last point, at least, Śāntideva would have to agree, since he is committed to the view that everything arises through the power of causal conditions (*pratyayabalāt*), and "we find nothing independent of them"[217]. The question is the extent to which these conditions are "material and institutional."

There are at least two different senses to the claim that virtue has "material and institutional conditions." The first sense has to do with education and moral development. Nussbaum discusses this point in expounding Aristotle (Nussbaum 2001a, 346-7).[218] The point is that educational institutions, beyond the education provided by the family, are

217. *sarvaṃ yatpratyayabalāt svatantraṃ tu na vidyate*, BCA VI.25.

218. It is not entirely clear that she supports the view herself. She does not criticize it, and elsewhere she frequently refers to her own views as Aristotelian (e.g. Nussbaum 1990, 37-8; Nussbaum 1988), but I am not sure whether this identification extends to this view of education. Regardless of whether it does, I think the point is significant, as a way of clarifying the possible meanings of insitutional support for virtue.

helpful in establishing good character, whatever one thinks that that might consist of. Śāntideva, I think, can grant this point with little reservation. He does see value, at least, in the monastic institutions of the *saṅgha*; its existence, and certainly the existence of buddhas and bodhisattvas, are extremely helpful to the individuals they teach, despite effectively being out of those individuals' control. This is one "external good" which is a genuine good for him, and not revalued; after all, its existence does not interfere with nonattachment, the way property does.

I would suggest further that on this point it is worth returning to Nussbaum's concerns about institutional racism and sexism. Since monastic institutions are a genuine good, access to them is also a real benefit. And so for women's ordination to be forbidden, as it is in the Theravāda Buddhist traditions of contemporary Southeast Asia, would seem to create real suffering for them. Likewise, in an era of gender equality, heavier restrictions posed on female over male monastics would seem to make women's renunciation less likely, and thus be a barrier to genuine reduction of suffering. A critique of Buddhist monastic sexism (or racism, to the extent that this is a problem) would seem to be quite compelling on grounds of

revaluation, in a contemporary context at the very least.[219]

Generally speaking, then, Śāntideva and Nussbaum could agree on the importance of institutions in the first sense, for education and moral development. The second sense of the claim is the one to which Śāntideva's work raises objections. This is the argument that, even if one has learned enough about virtue, one's character can still be hindered by poor material conditions: people can face "a deprivation of resources so central to human

219. Śāntideva does not, of course, make any of this critique. His work, like so much premodern thought, is at times strongly misogynistic. He does make arguments for his misogyny, claims about the danger and foulness of women; but these arguments are really claims to his heterosexual male audience about the foulness of sexual lust and the dangers of the householder's married life for liberation (e.g. ŚS 72). If we are to take them seriously in a contemporary context, we would likely need to see these arguments as warnings against any objects of sexual desire — that heterosexual women should beware the dangers and foulness of men, and perhaps that similar dangers apply to homosexuals dealing with people of their own sex. I should stress again that Śāntideva does not say or believe any of this either. As Liz Wilson (Wilson 1996) has noted, historically Buddhists have never turned the arguments about female foulness around to have it apply to men, even when speaking to a female audience. I suggest this modification because my concern in this chapter is with contemporary application of the ideal of revaluation (which it was not in chapters 2-5). While I think there is considerable power behind Śāntideva's rejection of political participation as it stands, I think his misogynistic claims would *only* have any power if they are made in this gender-neutral way, to be misandric as well as misogynist.

functioning that thought and character are themselves impaired or not developed." For "one functions badly if one is hungry... one thinks badly if one has to labor all day in work that does not involve the fully human use of one's faculties." (Nussbaum 1994a, 158-9)

This point Śāntideva seems to reject. For him, even events that seem to hinder virtue can actually provide an opportunity to become better. We saw in my third and fifth chapters how Śāntideva specifically mentions wrongdoing that hinders virtue as providing an opportunity for patience toward wrongdoing. And even suffering that does not come from wrongdoing is an opportunity to become ever better at enduring suffering: "Nothing is difficult that is an object of practice (*abhyāsa*). Therefore, by the practice of mild distress (*vyathā*), even great distress is tolerable."[220]

The reference to practice is instructive. Nussbaum refers relatively little in her account to specific practices aimed at improving one's conduct and mental states; but as we saw in the third chapter, such practices are quite important for Śāntideva. In this context, the most important of Śāntideva's practices is likely the achievement of the Sarva-

220. *na kiṃcid asti tad vastu yad abhyāsasya duṣkaram* | *tasmān mṛduvyathâbhyāsāt soḍhavyâpi mahāvyathā*, BCA VI.14.

dharmasukhakrānta meditative state. We saw before that Śāntideva claims that it is possible to reach this state, in which the bodhisattva can undergo literally hellish tortures and retain happy thoughts. How does he do so? Through a directed practice of bearing small pains, and of vowing that even those who torment him attain enlightenment. This practice is an example of what Pierre Hadot (1999, 86) refers to as a "practical exercise," as opposed to an "intellectual exercise" — based on the principle that one "begin practicing on easier things, so as gradually to acquire a stable, solid habit."

It is not clear from Nussbaum's account of the Stoics whether she sees them as having a comparable practice, or whether she thinks that it can succeed. But what the bodhisattva bears in the Sarvadharmasukhakrānta state seems considerably more deleterious than the kind of misfortunes Nussbaum describes — hunger and forced labour seem less threatening to one's character than being fried in oil or pounded like sugarcane. And yet, according to Śāntideva, with the right practice, one can maintain one's virtue and happiness even in the latter states.

What are we to make of this disagreement? Nussbaum is arguing that it is simply not realistic to think that people can remain virtuous and happy in a state of material deprivation. Śāntideva proposes practices that he

thinks *make* it realistic. The question then is whether such practices work — whether one can really achieve the kind of grace under pressure that Śāntideva imagines in the Sarvadharmasukhakrānta state, enabling one to resist even the worst possible material conditions.

It seems to me that this is a question of empirical psychology, in the broadest sense; and, as such, it can and should be resolved empirically. What do we learn from studies of those who actually have tried the kinds of practices that Śāntideva claims produce the Sarvadharmasukhakrānta state? What happens to revered monks and other virtuoso practitioners in dire conditions of war, famine, torture? Are they really capable of the patient endurance that he describes? The question is not rhetorical; I do not claim to know the answer to it. I think it is an urgent one, but beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Transcending humanity

In the previous point, Nussbaum questioned whether we *can* achieve a state where serious material losses no longer hurt us. But she also questions whether we *should*. Nussbaum's final argument, or set of arguments, reveals the most fundamental set of disagreements between her ethics and

Śāntideva's. She cites Aristotle approvingly to the effect that "political ties and ties of personal love and friendship" are distinctly human, partially constitutive of the good human life:

> He reminds his interlocutor that we are beings who think of these ties as not just necessary but also fine; not just a resource but also an intrinsic good. A life without them will not even be worth living — far less a candidate for *eudaimonia* [human flourishing, the good life]. (Nussbaum 1990, 374)

She adds: "what my argument urges us to reject as incoherent is the aspiration to leave behind altogether the constitutive conditions of our humanity, and to seek for a life that is really the life of another sort of being — as if it were a higher and better life for *us*." (Nussbaum 1990, 379, emphasis hers) The Stoics' and Epicureans' attempts to leave behind such attachments are a key example of such an aspiration, a desire for an inappropriate kind of transcendence. (Nussbaum 1990, 379-80)

Moreover, Nussbaum rejects the Stoics' attempt to transcend anger on the same grounds. She notes that she was driven to study the Stoics (and other Hellenistic philosophers) in part because she sympathized with their attempts to transcend anger. But she ultimately rejected this attempt because she found — in agreement with the Stoics — that anger is inextricably tied with attachment. The work of the Stoics advocated a

complex of ideas very much like Śāntideva's, including patience toward wrongdoing as well as nonattachment; and in order to reject the latter, she also had to reject the former. For in the end, Nussbaum finds that our commitments "to the well-being of oneself and one's own" are constitutive of our humanity. And

> it is, it seems, the depth of these commitments that makes an angry person plunge into extremes of reactive fury, resisting dissuasive arguments. It is because offenses are felt at the core of one's being that revenge seems so urgent and so necessary, its pleasure so seductive. But, once again: can Seneca tell Novatus they really are not important, without removing from him something essential not only to his Romanness, but also to his humanity? (Nussbaum 1990, 419)

Nussbaum observes a literary embodiment of the attempt to transcend humanity in one episode of the *Odyssey*. There, Odysseus is tempted to stay with the goddess Calypso on her island, and be ageless and eternal and live without grief and loss. Odysseus rejects Calypso's offer, choosing to return to the danger of the sea and to his human wife. Nussbaum applauds this decision not only because it makes the story more interesting for readers, but because something seems lost in the life where one does not risk heartache and loss. (Nussbaum 1990, 365-7) She does not reject ideals of transcendence entirely; but she rejects any attempt to seek a godlike state, beyond normal

human vulnerability and loss. The transcendence she approves of is of "an *internal* and human sort," as expounded in the works of Henry James, Marcel Proust, and James Joyce — a transcendence that involves becoming ever more aware of the subtleties of everyday human existence and responding to them accordingly (Nussbaum 1990, 365-7; Nussbaum 2001b, 710-14).

The contrast with Śāntideva stands out dramatically. For Śāntideva urges his audience to become literally godlike. This aspiration is most striking in his description of fully realized bodhisattvas (ŚS 325-47). The pores of these beings — the models whom Śāntideva urges his audience to emulate — emit rays of light that turn weapons into lotus garlands, that make the blind see (ŚS 341-2). We are surely beyond the "constitutive conditions of humanity" here.

Now, in the form that Śāntideva states them, such claims depend on the claim of rebirth, that after death a bodhisattva can enter a better body. They also seem *prima facie* implausible, and Śāntideva does not argue for them. Therefore, for reasons I outlined in the previous chapter, it seems fair to reject them.

But that is not my central concern here. For such passages make clear an important normative attitude in Śāntideva, regardless of their empirical

plausibility. Śāntideva urges us to attempt to become superhuman. And the attempt to be *superhuman* does not always depend on the *supernatural* — at least, in the terms that Nussbaum identifies humanity. If one can succeed in the project of nonattachment, really renouncing any feeling of ties to property and even relationships, one seems to have arrived in a state that, by her standards, is something other than human.

At this point it is appropriate to ask: what is wrong with that? It is true that Śāntideva wants us to transcend the normal human condition. But that condition is characterized by grief, by fear, by sorrow, by anger, by worry — the two thinkers can agree on that much. What is so great about being human that it merits all of this suffering, this *duḥkha*? To see Nussbaum's answer to this question, I think, it is important to turn to the method that underlies many of her arguments, which I will do now.

Prevalent ordinary beliefs

Why should we care so much about the constitutive conditions of humanity? Nussbaum answers this question most clearly, I think, while claiming to elaborate Aristotle's views. Aristotle's arguments defending the value of loved ones in a good life, she says, do not merely see them as means

to a higher end. “We think that a life without them, even with all other goods, is so seriously incomplete that it is not worth living.” (Nussbaum 2001a, 366)

The “we think” is central here. Nussbaum is referring to what she calls “prevalent ordinary beliefs,” beliefs that were commonplace among the ancient Greeks and seem to be so today as well. As a result, such an argument is “not a knock-down argument against the opponent.” She recognizes that an imagined opponent could say “sure we think this, but we’re wrong to think so.” That argumentative move is always available. But the point of arguing this way is to remind the opponent, or the reader, of how much is at stake in the claim being made. It reminds the opponent of the “depth and power” of the beliefs he wants us to shed; “it thus places on him the burden of showing why and for the sake of what these beliefs are to be given up.” (Nussbaum 2001a, 366)

Nussbaum derives the idea of prevalent ordinary beliefs from Aristotle’s concept of *phainomena*. *Phainomena* are the way that things, including truths about ethics, appear to us, the points with which we start our reflection — not merely empirical sense-data, but preexisting ideas about what is good and true. (Nussbaum 2001a, 243) And for Aristotle it is important to aim to *save* the *phainomena*, to avoid refuting too many of them;

when we have reached what we take to be the end point of our reflection, we must "show that our account does, in fact, preserve them as true — or, at any rate, the greatest number and the most basic." (Nussbaum 2001a, 247) This is not to say, however, that the method brooks no radical criticism — "the opponent of a prevalent but less basic appearance can always try to show us (relying on the Principle) that some other, more basic appearances conflict with this one and ought to lead us to abandon it." (Nussbaum 2001a, 258)

"The Principle" is the principle of non-contradiction, which I made central to my account of rationality in my second chapter. In order to say anything at all, Aristotle asserts, one must effectively make use of this principle — one must respect its normative force, in the way I outlined in that earlier discussion. If someone claims to deny the principle (and thereby implicitly contradicts himself), one cannot have a reasoned discussion with him. (Nussbaum 2001a, 252) Nussbaum makes no sign of disagreeing with Aristotle on these points, and her work in practice is concerned with contradictions as a problem, as we have seen.

Prevalent ordinary beliefs, or *phainomena*, are especially crucial to arguments about humanity and human nature, since, for Aristotle, the fact that we have these beliefs is itself a product of our being human (Nussbaum

2001a, 366). But they are, I think, at the heart of many of Nussbaum's other arguments as well. Justice and political participation, like attachments to relationships, are things that we contemporary Westerners tend to value deeply, as the ancient Greeks did; and we are suspicious of worldviews that ask us to give them up.[221]

The point seems a fair one. For in their own way, many of Śāntideva's arguments — especially those I have dealt with in this chapter — also rest on "prevalent ordinary beliefs" of a sort. He is not a foundationalist thinker, taking us to an unshakeable starting point from which he can deduce his views; given his Mādhyamika metaphysics, he cannot be. Rather, he takes the beliefs and experiences that his audience already begins with, and uses some

221. Suspicious enough, indeed, that in one article Nussbaum is ready to *assume* that a position of nonattachment must be rejected: having shown that nonattachment is necessarily implied in Stoic cosmopolitan politics, she adds, "Let me also proceed on the hypothesis that we will reject this course as an unacceptable route to the goal of justice..." She notes that Marcus Aurelius, her opponent here as elsewhere, has characterized his own position as akin to a death within life. But given that Marcus defends such a position as tenable, she says nothing about why it must be rejected; she does not defend the "hypothesis" further. (Nussbaum 2003b) Elsewhere she makes such a defence at greater length, in ways I have noted in this chapter, but Nussbaum's approach here demonstrates the strength of the prevalent ordinary beliefs she expects us to have.

of these to critique others. Many of these beliefs and experiences, moreover, scarcely seem limited to Śāntideva's place and time, but are shared by a 21st-century Western audience.[222] We experience grief, loss and anger as something painful, deeply hurtful to us, and this at least seems to be a bad thing. We seem to always want more property and more time with loved ones, and something feels deeply unsatisfactory about the fact that we can never get enough. These are feelings people must have experienced in Śāntideva's time, and they hardly seem alien to us.

On Nussbaum's side, although she acknowledges the potential for radical critique in Aristotle's account, she is sympathetic to the Stoics and Epicureans methodologically because of their "recognition that existing desires, intuitions, and preferences are socially formed and far from totally reliable." (Nussbaum 1994b, 488. She italicizes this phrase.) Still, they too reach even their radical conclusions by argument, "by argument that slices deeply into the pupil, drawing up hidden and deeper beliefs" (Nussbaum 1994b, 489) — as, I think, do Śāntideva's arguments about grief and anger. She ultimately rejects the views of the Hellenistic philosophers, of course —

222. Thus Kelsang Gyatso's English translation of the BCA (Elliott 2002) is billed on its cover as "A Buddhist poem for today."

but suggests that much of the strength of her rejection comes from being "able to discover a tension or inconsistency in the Hellenistic view itself." (Nussbaum 1994b, 489) We have seen now, though, that the inconsistencies she identifies do not apply to Śāntideva's revaluation, which is similar in central respects to the Hellenistic views she criticizes.

In the end, we reach a conflict between two sets of deeply felt beliefs. I would guess that all my readers can feel the power of each set to some extent, though no doubt many will feel one more strongly than the other. At this point it is tempting to throw up one's hands, to say that these opposites cannot be reconciled and one must simply make an arbitrary choice between them. But such an approach seems to me an abdication of the ethicist's responsibility. The issue here is momentous for any human being. Following Nussbaum to the fullest, one would live an emotional life immersed in human relationships, giving leeway to lust, grief and anger, participating in political communities. Following Śāntideva, one might live as a celibate monk, rooting out one's anger wherever it can be found, and "walk the world solitary as a rhinoceros"[223]. This is no small decision. If ethics cannot adequately address

223. *khaḍgasamā vicaranti mu lokaṃ*, ŚS 195.

such a fundamental choice, one might begin to wonder, what *can* it adequately address?

More, it seems, needs to be said. And more *can* be said. Several further questions suggest themselves. Are there deeper roots to the prevalent ordinary beliefs on both sides — cultural, historical, biological, conceptual? Can looking at these roots produce ground for a synthesis? Is there some way of living that does justice to both these sets of beliefs? Or is each way perhaps appropriate for different people in different times and places? If the latter, how might one find out which way is appropriate for oneself? These questions, I think, are all worth asking — and answering. To answer them in a satisfying way, however, would likely require going well beyond the scope of the present project. What I have attempted here is simply to move reflection on revaluation to the point where these are the questions are at issue, rather than the kinds of inconsistencies that Nussbaum first finds. I offer some further speculation about these questions in the final chapter.

Conclusion

Śāntideva's approach to ethical revaluation offers important correctives to Nussbaum's arguments about external goods. Śāntideva shows us that, while refusing to assign external goods the positive value for flourishing that they are normally assigned, many things are logically possible that seemed impossible on Nussbaum's account. Nussbaum claims that compassion depends on responding to others' losses of external goods; Śāntideva shows that one can still be compassionate without valuing external goods positively, as long as the compassion responds to suffering rather than to misfortune. Moreover, this compassion prevents one from falling into narcissism.

The most important contradictions that Nussbaum identifies in Platonic or Stoic ethical revaluation turn out not to be contradictions in Śāntideva's thought. Nussbaum argues that without seeing external goods as beneficial, one has no reason to provide them to others; Śāntideva shows that they can have a different kind of benefit, an internal benefit. Nussbaum argues that if one does not see wrongdoing as seriously harming its victim, one has no reason to prevent it; Śāntideva shows that one can prevent it for the wrongdoer's sake. And while Nussbaum is correct that revaluing external goods makes it difficult to motivate political participation, this is not a

contradiction for Śāntideva since he does not advocate such participation in the first place.

By making these points with Śāntideva's help, I have shown that the ideal of ethical revaluation is stronger and more coherent than Nussbaum makes it out to be. But I have not actually defended ethical revaluation as the correct approach, in our present context or any other. For there are two other arguments that are considerably more persuasive — first that we *can't* really transcend a reliance on material conditions for our virtue or well-being, and second that we shouldn't *try* to do so, because it would make us less human and conflict with other ideals that we hold deeply important as humans. The first question could be resolved empirically. The second is the most difficult, and I have not tried to resolve it here. But I have speculated on some ways in which it could be resolved, and will offer further suggestions in the final chapter.

VIII. Conclusions and future prospects

I have now explored Śāntideva's idea of ethical revaluation, and its implications, in a variety of contexts, in ways that build on each other. I have shown the nature of ethical revaluation and his arguments for it, demonstrated that two apparent contradictions that follow from it are not really contradictions at a closer look, and examined how the resolution of those apparent contradictions can challenge our understanding of Śāntideva's own thought, of Mahāyāna ethics in general, and of contemporary non-Buddhist normative ethics.

I see four key lessons that come out of this exploration — two out of the exegetical exploration of Śāntideva's ideas in chapters 2-5, and two out of the application in chapters 6-7 (which of course builds on the earlier chapters). First and most generally, we see the kind of shape that rational normative ethics can take in Buddhist thought. From the broadest arguments for entering the bodhisattva path (chapter 2) through the arguments leading to ethical revaluation (chapter 3) and the specific ways in which Śāntideva resolves apparent problems in ethical revaluation (chapters 4-5), we have seen him logically derive normative conclusions from premises both explicit

and implicit, in ways that do not involve internal contradictions and that highlight contradictions in alternative views. This stream of argument stands in contrast to Damien Keown's claim that Buddhism does not have normative ethics.

Second, we have seen a challenge to prevailing understandings of Mahāyāna ethics. A standard and prevalent model of Mahāyāna ethics sees suffering as deriving directly from material deprivation or victimization, and therefore urges political action as a consequence of the bodhisattva's compassion. While such an approach may be appropriate for other Mahāyāna texts, we have seen how it does not capture the implications of ethical revaluation for Śāntideva's thought. For Śāntideva, while there are indeed reasons to alleviate poverty and prevent wrongdoing, these reasons are counterintuitive — one wants to make others into better people and protect the wrongdoers from themselves. As a consequence, the value of political action is markedly diminished in his thought. One might speculate that political action is something valued so highly by contemporary readers of Buddhist texts that they are highly reluctant to see those texts as critical of such action.[224]

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224. One may note here Thomas Tweed's (2000, 140-5) argument that

Third, we have found one method to make comparative ethics valuable to contemporary normative ethics. In reading comparative works one may often be struck by the question "so what?" What does one gain by comparing two different thinkers? Here, I have used comparison as a methodological tool for making normative claims, by explicitly taking a single contemporary "live" option as one of the objects of comparison, and using similarities of concern as a basis for exploring differences of opinion. This method has allowed me to show gaps in contemporary reasoning that Śāntideva is able to fill, while still paying attention to the details and nuances on both sides of the comparison.

Finally, beyond this methodological lesson from the contemporary application, there is the substantive lesson, or set of lessons. Śāntideva's clever ideas about giving for others' benefit and preventing wrongdoing for the wrongdoer's sake allow his work not merely to reconcile its own apparent internal contradictions, but also to reconcile the apparent contradictions that Martha Nussbaum sees in the ethical revaluations of Plato and the Stoics.

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characterizations of Buddhism as politically "passive" (rather than activist) frequently gave the tradition a negative reception in the United States of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It seems to have been the case for a very long time that rejection of activism sits uncomfortably with Americans, and this may have been the case for other Western audiences as well.

His ideas make ethical revaluation appear considerably more plausible in a contemporary context, by knocking down a number of arguments that would otherwise have posed barriers to its acceptance.

This is not, however, to say that Śāntideva offers a decisive refutation of Nussbaum's views. I noted that both their views seem to be based on "prevalent ordinary beliefs," the beliefs and experiences with which their audiences approach the discussion. I claimed that it was possible and desirable to go further, to ask questions that decide in some respect between these prevalent ordinary beliefs. But I noted that to answer them would likely require going well beyond the scope of this dissertation. In the last pages of the dissertation I will speculate what exactly might be required to do so.

One approach to going further was proposed orally by Mark Berkson at the 2006 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion. Berkson was responding to my presentation to the Comparative Religious Ethics group, of what are now my sixth and seventh chapters (in an earlier form). He suggested that one could reconcile Śāntideva's and Nussbaum's ethical approaches through a life that took the outward form of Nussbaumian flourishing — living in the world with property, human relationships,

political participation — while inwardly renouncing attachment and anger.[225] He proposed the Bhagavad Gītā, the Zen oxherding pictures, and certain Sufi texts as historical examples of such an ideal.

To take such an approach, however, does not by itself do justice to either Śāntideva's concerns or Nussbaum's; for while it is in some sense a compromise between the two, it is not a synthesis. Nussbaum sees not merely one's outward relationships, but one's inner engagement and attachment, as central to the good life. Something fundamentally human is lost if one goes through those relationships like a play-actor, as surely as if one renounced them entirely for the monastic life. So too, Śāntideva's ethical revaluation warns us of the dangers posed by external objects themselves, at least if we are not sufficiently advanced. If we did try to go through the trappings of a worldly life in this way, it would affect our minds, bringing us back into the attachment and anger we tried to escape.

A further engagement between the two positions, I think, would likely require declaring one of the two right and the other wrong in at least some

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225. Berkson mentioned only attachment and not anger, because the chapter at that time did not yet incorporate my discussions of anger and patient endurance. I think that including anger is faithful to the spirit of his proposal, however.

respects; but ideally it would involve finding some sort of synthesis that genuinely addresses the concerns of both. A position like Berkson's could hypothetically be the result of such a synthesis, but it would need to have addressed the reasons that Śāntideva and Nussbaum have for rejecting such a view, probably by showing that Śāntideva is psychologically wrong that possessions and worldly life lead one to attachment, and that Nussbaum is philosophically wrong that attachment is good. An alternate synthesis could perhaps involve specifying that the way of life prescribed by each thinker is appropriate to a different respective time or place; but if it did, it would need to specify how one could decide which way of life was appropriate to which situation.

To ask the further probing questions that could bring one to such a synthesis would probably require involving the views of other thinkers. The seventh chapter's inquiry, for example, has effectively assumed that compassion is a good thing. Nussbaum attacks the Stoics on the grounds that their devaluation of external goods makes no room for compassion. Śāntideva devalues external goods while giving compassion a prominent place. But what about the Stoics themselves, who actually make the case that compassion (*eleos* or *misericordia*) is a bad thing? I have here presented only Nussbaum's

account of the Stoics. A fuller perspective could bring in their own views and examine what a Stoic reply to Nussbaum might look like.

Such a project, again, would go beyond the scope of this dissertation, which is an exploration of Śāntideva and the idea of ethical revaluation as found in his work. The dissertation has set its sights on goals that are less far-reaching but still significant: to demonstrate the rationality of Śāntideva's normative ethics, to highlight the implications of ethical revaluation for Mahāyāna ethics, to propose and exemplify a method for comparison in normative work, and to refute contemporary claims about ethical revaluation. The larger questions, of the ultimate normative status of ethical revaluation, have their place in a different project. I leave those questions unanswered here not as a tease, but as an invitation.

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ŚS Śikṣāsamuccaya. Edition: *Çikshāsamuccaya: a compendium of Buddhistic teachings, compiled by Çāntideva chiefly from earlier Mahāyāna sūtras*; ed. Cecil Bendall (1970), Bibliotheca Buddhica I, Osnabruck, Germany: Biblio Verlag.

ŚSK Śikṣāsamuccaya Kārikā, in the Bendall edition of the ŚS above.

Primary (other)

BCAP Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā of Prajñākaramati. Edition: *Bodhicaryāvatāra of Śāntideva with the commentary Pañjikā of Prajñākaramati*; ed. P.L. Vaidya (1960), Buddhist Sanskrit Texts XII, Darbhanga, India: Mithila Institute. Page references given are to the Poussin edition (listed with "P" in the Vaidya edition's margins).

BG Bhagavad Gītā. Edition: *The Bhagavad Gītā*, ed. Winthrop Sargeant (1994), SUNY Series in Cultural Perspectives, Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Dhs Dhammasaṅganī. Edition: Sri Lanka Tripitaka Project, available for download at http://www.buddhistethics.org/palicanon.html as of 14 Aug 2007.

MP Milindapañhā. Edition: Sri Lanka Tripitaka Project, available for download at http://www.buddhistethics.org/palicanon.html as of 14 Aug 2007.

JM Jātakamālā of Āryaśūra. Edition: *Jātakamālā Bodhisatvāvadānamālāparaparyāyā of Āryaśūra*; ed. Surya Prakash Vyas (1994), Kashi Sanskrit Series 278, Varanasi: Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan.

NE Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle. Edition: J. Bywater, available for download and online search at www.perseus.tufts.edu as of 14 Aug 2007.

SAS Sarvārthasiddhi (commentary on TAS below, same edition)

SN Saṃyutta Nikāya. Edition: Sri Lanka Tripitaka Project, available for download at http://www.buddhistethics.org/palicanon.html as of 14 Aug 2007.

TAS Tattvārtha Sūtra of Umāsvāti. Edition: *That Which Is: Tattvartha*

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VV Vigrahavyāvartani of Nāgārjuna. Edition: *Vigrahavyāvartani of Nāgārjuna: Sanskrit Text*, eds. Christian Lindtner and Richard Mahoney (2003), available for download at http://indica-et-buddhica.org as of 14 Aug 2007.

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